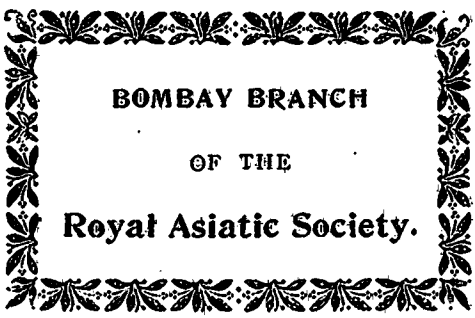
00029347



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 21 October, 2015

SUBSTANCE

OF

THE SPEECH

OF

JOHN C. HOBHOUSE, Esq. M.P. F.R.S.

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On THURSDAY, 27th APRIL, 1826,

ON

THE MOTION OF LORD JOHN RUSSELL,

FOR

A Reform of Parliament.

29347
a C

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXXVI.

350.42
Hob/Sub
29347

LONDON:
PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

SPEECH,

&c.

MR. SPEAKER,

SINCE it appears to be the course of this evening's discussion, that the supporters, as well as the opposers of the Noble Lord's proposal, should follow each other, not singly, but in pairs, I shall venture to take this opportunity of addressing myself to the House immediately after my Noble Friend (Lord Glenorchy); and, before I say a word on what has fallen from the opponents of the motion, I shall beg leave to remark, that my Noble Friend (Lord Glenorchy) has furnished a decisive proof of the moderation with which he looks at this great question:—he has very properly deprecated the forbearance of that man who should persist in keeping company with thieves and villains merely because he did not as yet find their hands in his pockets. But, with submission to him, I must beg to say that, as far as the thieves and villains to whom he alludes are concerned, that is, as far as the borough holders

are concerned, we have not even that pretext for forbearance; for we do find, we have found, the hands of those light-fingered gentry in our pockets —in other words, in the pockets of the people; and this fact it is that makes us anxious for a change of system.

The Honourable Member for Newcastle (Mr. Denison) claimed the indulgence of the House, on the score of the infrequency of his interference in the debates of Parliament. I must apply for the same favour upon exactly the contrary grounds —namely, the fact of my having often spoken before on the same subject; for I feel it a duty attached to all those who are returned by the popular portion of the constituency of England, to take every occasion of expressing their sentiments on this great question.

It is true, we can do little more than that which the old Scotch reformers called "testifying;" but, in default of more efficient efforts, we should be unpardonable if we omitted that harmless mode of enforcing, or at least of expressing our opinions; and, impressed with this persuasion, I shall now attempt to reply to what has been urged by the Honourable Gentlemen opposite:—

As for what has fallen from the Honourable Member for Orford (Mr. Ross), he has certainly gone to his work with considerable boldness; he scorns a compromise,—with him I can have no

community of sentiment,—difference with him does not lie in the shades of opinion,—he does not argue much, but he asserts roundly,—with him, reform never was, nor now is, nor ever can be expedient, or even sufferable. He despises all the phenomena of the times, or he draws from the contemplation of them an inference quite different from the rest of the world,—he feels it, no doubt, not a little magnanimous to run counter to the general march and progress of opinion; and whilst all the other luminaries of the firmament are moving in one direction, the Member for Orford ambitiously pursues the contrary career, and, like the Apollo of Ovid, proudly boasts—

Nitor in adversum, nec me, qui cætera, vincit
Impetus; et rapido contrarius evehor orbi:

for, Sir, I assert, that the course and current of events lead to exactly the opposite conclusion from that to which the Honourable Member has arrived.—I may also add, without disrespect, that by that course and current wiser men than the Honourable Member have been borne away; and that I do not despair even of seeing him, at last, sagely yielding to the influence of the resistless stream.

The other opponent of the measure (Mr. Denison) is of another complexion,—he is more temperate,—he can bring himself to believe that a

popular and purely democratic assembly *may* work well; nay, he has confessed that, in America, it *does* work well. That Honourable Member's speech has made me regret he should be found in the ranks of our opponents: his talents, his liberality, would make me augur better things of him: as it is, I can only say of him, "*Utinam noster esset.*" Sir, I attribute no small portion of that Gentleman's liberal disposition to the part of his political education which he has lately received in America. That fortunate journey will be of use to him during his life,—it will be of use to this House,—it will be of use to the country,—it cannot but have imparted to him that spirit which is imbibed by the contemplation of free institutions, and which an impartial and enlightened mind like his must have caught amongst the free citizens of that great republic. But the Honourable Member must forgive me if I tell him that, I think he has not carefully investigated the history either of America or England, if he attributes the free principles of government which prevail in the former country to any discovery made by the founders or the successors of the American Revolution, or to any circumstances which render that vast country the peculiar and favourite abode of a pure democracy: no, Sir, the Americans are our brothers; we may speak of them without the asperity of rivalship; but, it is

but justice to the memory of those who were their and our common forefathers, to say, that the democratic principles which pervade and animate the whole American Union are of English origin;—are derived from the principles which, however they may now flourish beyond the Atlantic, first started into life upon this our native soil. The great battle of American independence was fought to prove, that taxation without representation is a tyranny that Englishmen ought not to bear,—it was but the same battle, and the victory that was gained was but the same victory, that had rendered for ever memorable the glorious Revolution of 1688. The struggle was in no respect different from that earlier resistance to arbitrary power which slavish historians have branded with the name of rebellion; and the real instructors, the real political sages, whose lessons inspired the Americans of the first Congress with their resolution to die in defence of freedom and of a pure representative system, were the Cokes and the Seldens, the Pyms and the Hampdens, who gloriously contended for that liberty at home, which their contemporaries, the first exiles, thought they could find only in the deserts of the western world. It is, therefore, a mistake to suppose that the institutions of the Americans are so entirely the offspring of the peculiar origin, and manners, and position of that powerful nation as to render

them inapplicable to the system of English Government: on the contrary, whatever is free, whatever is popular, whatever is essentially representative in their Government, is English; and if we desire to know what were the parliamentary *principles* of our forefathers, we have but to look at the *practice* of our American contemporaries.

I think that the Honourable Member for Newcastle has also made a mistake when he supposes the representative system in France to be formed on the basis of property, as in contradistinction to the American basis of population. I own it appears to be so; but those who have visited France with the eyes of a Reformer, know full well that by a species of management, which it is not necessary now to explain, the Crown has contrived to get the elections, for the most part, into the convenient channel; so much so that, except in Paris, and one or two places where the electors can act in concert, the ministerial candidate is almost sure of success. In fact, the Bourbons have been wise enough to take a leaf out of our book; the government by mere brute force has been found too dangerous—they now try the surer mode of corruption, and, under pretence of giving to their subjects a representative system, make them consent to infringements upon their rights, and to exactions upon their purses, which could not be obtained by the old

method of undisguised despotism. The restored dynasty have made a surprising progress in this their holy work; and they have been enabled so to do, not because they have been aided by the aristocracy, but because they have no aristocracy to oppose them.—There is not in France any body of men round which the people can rally themselves, and stem the torrent of power; and, as the landed estates in that country are cut, as it were, into shreds and patches, and are undergoing a perpetual subdivision, there are no individuals of sufficient importance to make head against the dispensers of the favours of the Crown. Where there is the least show of opposition, every engine is set to work; and where corruption fails, open injustice is not unfrequently brought into play, in the mode adopted of selecting the returning officers, and securing the election of the Court candidate. Nay, even violence has been tried; and the removal of ferry boats, and the breaking down of bridges, have been the last resource, not of popular fury, but of ministerial manœuvre. So that, although France does not enjoy our well-working borough system, she has arrived at the result of that happy arrangement; and, so far from returning a representation from the property of the country may, in fact, be rather said to send to her Chamber the representatives of the property and the influence of the Crown.

Indeed, the opposition to the measures of ministers in France is extremely insignificant, when compared with that which sits on these benches. And here I must beg leave to correct a misapprehension of the Honourable Member for Newcastle. He objects to my Honourable Colleague (Sir F. Burdett) the having praised the House of Commons for its improving purity, whilst at the same time he calls for a reform. But my Honourable Colleague did not praise the House of Commons; he praised the Opposition;—he said he had never sat down with so many honourable men, notoriously acting solely upon public principle, and swayed by no base motive nor selfish influence.—This is very different from passing an eulogy on the House of Commons itself. Of that House, indeed, we may say that (without embarrassing ourselves with the questions put by Honourable Members, as to whether it be more or less corrupt than at former periods) it is quite as corrupt as any ministers can wish;—we may say, with Mr. Burke, who has been quoted on the other side, and who may be quoted for any side of almost any question, that "FOR ANY PURPOSES OF POPULAR CONTROUL, IT IS NOT A HOUSE OF COMMONS."

These were the words of that politician;—what was true then, is true now. I can hardly understand how any one should venture to deny the

assertion: yet it is denied; and to my infinite surprise, the Member for Newcastle has this night adduced the discussion and decision of the question relative to the increased salary of the President of the Board of Trade, as a proof that the people exercise a salutary controul over the deliberations of Parliament.

This appears to me the most unfortunate instance that could be selected for such a purpose; nor do I imagine it would be easy to find a more complete illustration of the corruption of Parliament, and of the necessity of Reform:—for, in the first place, I contend, that, except to such an assembly, no minister would have dared to make such a proposition:—secondly, I must remind the Honourable Member, that the proposal, the ultimate abandonment of which he quotes as so creditable to Parliament, was carried by a majority of Parliament, of which majority, by the way, he was one. In the third place, it must be remarked, that the said majority, being eighty-seven in all, was composed of thirty-eight Members in receipt of emolument from office, and of ten others nearly connected with such placemen; whilst only one English county Member voted for the proposal. I ask, is it possible to give a more unfavourable picture of the present composition of Parliament, than that which this very majority presents to us? I ask, is it possible to form to oneself the idea of a repre-

sentation more corrupt and contemptible than this commended vote affords?

Even in another point of view, this very vote shows the necessity of Reform; for the smallness of the majority is a sufficient evidence of the natural consequence which would result from a frequent recurrence to the people for the choice of their representatives. Would not that majority have been much greater had not this been the last session of the Parliament? It is notorious, that those Members who are in the habit of supporting Government, and are partly chosen by the popular part of the constituency, just at the close of their career, are apt to tremble at their approaching dissolution. After four or five years of submission to Ministers, they no sooner see the immediate approach of their latter end, than they give some sign of grace, and bethink them of the account which they shall have to render at the day of popular judgment. They resolve to signalise their last moments by some virtuous deed; and, like the repentant death-bed sinners satirised by Dean Swift, are eager to "make a sacrifice to God of the devil's leavings." Hence we had only one English County Member bold enough to vote for what the Member for Taunton called the Board of Trade Job; and that fact alone speaks volumes in favour of one part of our reformation—I mean shorter Parliaments.

With respect, Sir, to the peculiar mode by which the Reformers would wish to carry their wishes into effect, I beg to assure the Honourable Member for Newcastle that, when he says we can choose only from two schemes—the American basis of population, or the French basis of property, as he calls it (very improperly, I think), he little knows the variety of plans proposed by us for the accomplishment of our great object:—as for the French plan, as now managed, we certainly would have nothing to do with it. There are, however, many, many ways by which we think we can modify and mingle the two principles of property and population, so as to arrive at the result we desire—namely, a fair controul of the people over the measures of the Executive.

My Noble Friend, the mover, has his plan; I shall vote for that. My Friend, the Member for the County of Durham, whose absence we so much deplore on this occasion, has his scheme; for this also I should vote: other Reformers, and myself amongst them, have their peculiar notions on the subject; but I fancy, that the great mass of us in the country would consent to almost any change, from the conviction that the present state of the representation is the worst and most pernicious that can be imagined. The first step we want is, that which the Noble Mover has proposed; namely, an acknowledgment by this House that some change is necessary, and will be made.

This will, of itself, be a most important Reform; and the inevitable consequence of this first step would, I confidently believe, be the attainment, at some time, of all we can desire.—Let us but introduce the fine end of the wedge, and trust to us for getting in the larger end afterwards.—I perfectly well understand the meaning of those cheers from the opposite benches,—but I am unconscious of having made any admission unfavourable to the cause which I attempt to advocate.—Sir, it would be dishonourable; it would deceive nobody, if I pretended to say that I should rest satisfied with the scheme of my Noble Friend: all I mean to say is, that if the House should once be persuaded to entertain the principles of Reform, I will answer for attempting, at least, to drive the measure home,—I will answer for the great body of the Reformers doing their utmost to make the project effectual.—Indeed, why should they not? Why should they be satisfied with obtaining any thing short of their object, when that object is in itself unobjectionable?—But if there be any men here, or in the country, who presume to insinuate that our end and aim are not such as we pretend,—if they would insinuate that anarchy, and revolution, and spoliation of property be the real object of our endeavours, in that case I repel the charge with the scorn and utter contempt that it deserves. —What! have the Reformers more to gain, by a subversion of the order of things, than their oppo-

nents?—What! have not the Reformers as much to lose, by lawless violence, as those who uphold the present system?—Indeed, they have, and, I believe I may say, more too:—amongst the Reformers are to be found the wealthiest proprietors—the greatest names—the most important citizens of this powerful community.—Their high characters—their large possessions—the thousand ties that bind them to society, are pledges for the purity of their motives, and the sincerity of their professions, when they declare that they entertain no projects inconsistent with the good of their country, and the virtue and happiness of their fellow-subjects. The Reformers can have no other wish than that which they profess; namely, to recover for the people that controul which is, by right, theirs; and to give them, by restoring the House of Commons to its original purity, the only real security for their persons and for their property. They ask for nothing new. The Member for Newcastle has quoted some agreeable Latin verses, by which he would hint to us that the present system can boast the charm of antiquity; but it would be a waste of words to recapitulate the evidence so often given here and elsewhere to show that the Parliament, as now constituted, is a wretched and, comparatively, a recent innovation, which has been ingrafted and has grown on the ancient institutions of England, together with those two other much-petted and unnatural children, the

standing debt and the standing army.—Efforts to garble elections, and bribe or intimidate Members, may, of course, be discovered in early times; but I repeat, that the House of Commons, as at present framed, and as at present working, whether for good or evil, is of comparatively a recent date; and that the people have by degrees, and those (considering the lapse of ages) not very slow degrees, been cheated out of their ancient privilege to return a Parliament upon the old popular basis of representation—the communities of counties, and the communities of towns.*

And here I must be permitted to notice a most extraordinary position taken up by the Member for Orford. He contended, that a Reform of Parliament would throw the elections out of the hands of the real proprietors of England into those possessed of no respectable means of subsistence. Strange, indeed, to be said by any one—and stranger still to be said by a Member for Orford, in the face of so many county and city Representatives, who have Constituents. Did the Honourable Member never happen to hear, that the complaint of the Reformers points exactly to the fact which he has perverted and enlisted into his singular argument? The great complaint of the Reformers

* A popular and easy, but, at the same time, a most convincing reference to historical facts on this subject may be found in Mr. Creevey's Letters to Lord John Russell, published in the beginning of this year 1826.

is, that the body of electors—that is, the body that votes for the majority of this House, are persons of no property—are persons whose abode is, or ought to be, the workhouse,—who have no will—no power—no voice of their own,—who, when they solemnly declare that they give their *vote*, that is, their *wish*, for the candidate whom they choose, are guilty of the basest and most pernicious perjury,—who are the mere organs of others, and depending upon their masters for the rags they wear, and the scanty food they eat, and the wretched cabin that shelters them, have no opportunity, and scarcely, perhaps, feel an inclination, to perform the sacred duty imposed upon the real independent elector. The complaint of the Reformers is, that, whilst such an unhappy, miserable part of the population hold the elective franchise, and use it not for themselves, but under the controul, and for the benefit of others, the real respectable citizens—the contributors to the exigencies of the state—the most valuable members of the community, who have given pledges of fidelity to the Government, and to the country, are not partakers of the privilege which alone can give them the means of protecting their property; namely, a share in the choice of the Representation. We claim, for the opulence—the industry—the importance of such towns as Birmingham and Manchester, the rights now thrown away

upon, and shamefully bartered by, the pennyless, idle, insignificant vote-sellers of such boroughs as Orford.

The truth, as it seems to me, is, that the arguments of our opponents furnish a decisive evidence of the character of the strange, anomalous system which they attempt to defend;—all the forms of Parliament, suppose it to be free, and fair, and independent—all the facts pronounce it to be exactly the reverse in every respect. Our forms tell us that Peers shall not interfere in elections—our facts inform us that Peers return something very like a majority of the House. Our forms require that when a Member accepts office, his Constituents shall have the chance of deciding whether they like him as well in his character of a placeman, as when he was not a holder of office:—What do the facts prove to us?—that there is no real reference made to the constituency of the country; but that, by the easy machinery of rotten boroughs, or close corporations, the vacating the seat, and the subsequent re-election, are matters of form.

Let me select an instance:—The Foreign Secretary represented Liverpool before he was in office: when His Majesty gave him the seals, he was obliged to vacate his seat. Did he appeal to his Liverpool friends for their opinion as to the step he had taken, and did he give them an oppor-

tunity of showing how the Act of Parliament was meant to operate? No such thing! he retired from the Representation of Liverpool,—and nestled in a borough—in a borough which not only has no objection to a placeman, but prefers one; and which, not having been cruel to such suitors as Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Bragge Bathurst, could scarcely fail of being kind to the Right Honourable Gentleman. I may be told, the Right Honourable Gentleman might have been returned for Liverpool, if he had so pleased:—perhaps he might. Why did he not so please?—I will tell the House; and my explanation will give another proof how well the system works:—A Cabinet Minister, especially a leader in Parliament, usually declines to represent a great city or a county, because it is understood that he would have to attend too closely to the interests of his Constituents—that is to say, that he would be called upon to dispense the favours of the Crown amongst those who returned him to Parliament, and this would be in the usual way of business. I request the House to remark what a picture this gives of the state of the Representation;—the Constituent thinks he does his Representative a favour because he sends him to that place where he may turn his talents to account; the Representative thinks that if he does get any thing by his parliamentary proficiency, he is bound in duty to shed a portion

of the golden shower upon the worthy electors on whose shoulders he has ascended to promotion; and so by this mutual good-will and reciprocity of benefits both parties are pleased—both parties are rewarded;—the individual interests of the electors are well looked after—the interests of the individual Representative are by no means neglected;—only one party is forgotten and put out of view—the People.

Need I mention another glaring contrast between the forms and the facts connected with Parliament. We have, Heaven knows how many, statutes against bribery; and all our election-law is founded on the pretence, that there ought to be, and is, no undue influence in the practice of elections. What is more notorious than the disgraceful, wicked traffic by which all these statutes and laws are evaded? They have been, indeed, long evaded; and it is not now, for the first time, that good men have thought it far preferable that, if Parliament is not to be reformed, there should be a repeal of all these election statutes. An illustrious Member of this House, if virtue can make a man illustrious,—I mean Sir John Barnard, made a motion to this effect in 1754. He proposed that the bribery law should be done away with, as it gave rise to nothing but perjury;—I say the same as he did; and I add, that besides the perjury which disgraces the individual elector, there is

a widely spread evil which afflicts the country, arising out of these violated laws; namely, the delusion which is thus spread over the whole system, and which would make an unreflecting, inexperienced man, believe that the true old principles of the constitution were carried into effect, and that the representation now returned to Parliament was fairly, freely, and purely chosen. Let us, at least, get rid of this mockery; let us cease to pretend to be honest, if we cannot make up our minds to be really virtuous; let us not add to our other sins that basest and meanest of all vices—hypocrisy; and if we resolve that seats shall be continued to be bought and sold, like cattle stands at a fair, let us confess the fact, and have done with the mean, dishonest, unprofitable fiction that arrays us in the borrowed robes of purity and independence. It is my own opinion that the truth should be known, and fully known, on this subject; and I exceedingly object to any proceedings, however serviceable in other respects, which tend to give to this House a character it does not deserve. And this brings me to a topic that is called to my mind by what fell the other night from an Honourable Friend of mine, the Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), who, by some strange accident, is not now in his place.—That Gentleman, to my great surprise, said, that if the Opposition would but do their duty, some

great results might be expected. Now, I class this sort of assertion amongst the delusions which ought to be dispelled, in order to enable the country to understand the real state of the Parliament. I would ask my Friend, What he means by "the Opposition doing their duty?"—I suppose he means, coming down in force, night after night, and voting upon every disputed question. I beg to ask, what would be the consequence of the Opposition adopting this course of conduct?—Cannot any one, who knows the working of the system, answer the question? certainly;—if the Opposition came down in numbers every night, the Ministers would come down in numbers every night;—if our notes were daily issued and attended to, so would theirs;—if our benches were full, theirs would overflow;—if we were always here, they would never be absent: and, what would be the result?—as long as the contest lasted, the majorities and the minorities would be increased, but the proportion would be the same—the decision would be the same;—and, as long as seven shall be more than three, or ten more than five, the Ministerial *ayes* would inevitably vanquish the Opposition *noes*. Then, too, let me ask, Who is tired first, the patriot or the placeman?—Which spirit is likely to burn out first,—that which is supplied by principle, and, if you will, a love of contention, or that with which the Secretary of the Treasury

knows full well how to inspire the well-organized, obedient adherents of administration? The experiment has been fully tried before—it was tried by Mr. Fox and the extraordinary men who were his constant associates: night after night, session after session, they came, and fought, and were beaten. —It has been tried most completely by those who are around me, in behalf of the Honourable Member for Montrose himself: he cannot have forgotten the sessions of 1821 and 1822:—I am sure I have not, nor can any of us;—it almost destroyed us;—we divided on every item of every estimate;—we were glued to these seats. The evening sun went down upon us in this hostile array; and when he arose in the morning, he shone upon our undiminished ranks. If ever Opposition despised hunger and thirst, and watchfulness for conscience sake, it was the Opposition that was led by my Friend during those never-ending sessions. But were not the Ministerialists equally on the alert? We had, indeed, the satisfaction of fatiguing them as much as ourselves, but that was all; and if we had our *seventy*, they had their *hundred and seventy*; and that very period was signalised by perhaps as pernicious and absurd decisions as ever disgraced a parliamentary session;—some little improvement in our financial statement—some few farthing reductions, long since repented of and repaired, we did indeed procure; but any thing like a real national or con-

stitutional object, we did not, because we could not obtain. The machine worked as usual; the majority was greater than the minority; and if any serious effect was produced, I rather should be inclined to say, the effect was not beneficial; for foolish, unreflecting debate-readers, seeing a great deal said, thought a great deal done, by the Opposition; and this House began to acquire a character which it did not, and never can, as now constituted, fairly deserve: so that I must really entreat my Honourable Friend never more to use the phrase of "the Opposition doing their duty;" it tends to augment the great delusion, and nothing else: Better far to tell the truth at once; —no attendance, no efforts of ours, in this place, can make us a match for Ministers;—I am not talking of the men, but their offices; let them become the Opposition, and we shall know how to deal with them easily enough.

Sir, it is this deep-felt conviction of the omnipotence of Ministers for the time being, and of the managers of this House, that makes me so exceedingly grateful for whatever good they condescend to do in their various departments.—Hence the incense which I humbly venture, with overflowing gratitude, occasionally to pour at their feet. It is not from wantonness, it is not from attaching undue importance to my praise, but from a sincere sense of obligation, that I commend their pro-

ceeding, knowing what mischief they might do if they would. I tremble and laud them whenever, instead of speaking to us in storms and whirlwinds, they shed their light, and heat, and kindly influence upon us. I look at the power of Ministers in this House, in exactly the same point of view as it was regarded by Mr. Horne Tooke. When a law was made purposely to exclude that illustrious man from a seat in this House, a person who knew less of the world than Mr. Tooke did, would perhaps have been loud in his complaints and remonstrances, but he expressed himself much indebted to the Minister of the day for being contented with so slight an infliction; "For," said he, "if he had pleased so to do, I am sure he might have ordered me to be hung up in the lobby." This persuasion it is that makes me also satisfied with the smallest donations; not forgetting, however, one important fact, that it is for the advantage of Ministers occasionally to make some trifling sacrifice of their personal interests, in order to give respectability and a character of independence to the parliamentary system, by which alone they live, and move, and have their being: occasional concessions on their parts serve, as it were, to accelerate the wheels of the great machine with which they themselves revolve, and which unfortunately bears along with it the fate and fortunes of this mighty country.

Hence, it is not at all to be wondered at that Ministers take every opportunity of praising this House, and the manner in which it works. We must all recollect the eloquent eulogies by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer claimed for the "*calumniated*" Parliament a due share of the commendations deserved, for having contributed to, or rather brought about, that enviable prosperity which had scarcely been hoped for, and which was surely to know no end. With what pleasure "we sat attentive to our own applause!" The Reformers might well be afraid that they would never again be able to "calumniate," and that all their feeble remonstrances would be drowned in the general acclamations of joy and gratitude. But, such is the mutability of human affairs, their apprehensions were groundless; and if the Chancellor's calumniated Parliament was fairly permitted to take credit for the prosperity of the country two years ago, so it must be fairly chargeable with the reverses of the present day. It would be extremely unjust to ascribe to the workings of the parliamentary system all the successes of a prosperous period, and to acquit that system of all participation in the causes of distress. The Reformers have a right to select for the confirmation of their opinions those seasons of disaster, which prove, that if the system does work well at one time, it does work exceedingly ill at others.

The Reformers are not men to rejoice in the distresses of the country merely because they tend to corroborate their doctrines, but they feel they ought to employ those distresses as useful lessons for the instruction of their fellow-countrymen; they feel they ought to let slip no such opportunity of pointing out the real workings and the true effects of the bepraised parliamentary Government.

If, however, instead of appealing to a general fact, and to the acknowledged condition of the country, we should be asked to select individual measures, I would undertake to mention a succession of follies and inconsistencies recommended by triumphant majorities at the time, but now so utterly decried and disavowed, that no one seems willing to confess he had any share in placing them in our statute-book. If there is any one department of legislation more than another which might be thought to be the peculiar province of this House, it is, doubtless, the financial; we are, constitutionally, the guardians of the public purse, and the habits of many of us ought to befit us for that duty. Now, I would ask, What have been our deeds?—What our workings, in that department? Let me mention an instance or two of the wisdom of Parliament in this respect.—First: Is there any paradox so ridiculous, any false reasoning now so entirely rejected of all

persons, as what was consecrated year after year, by majority after majority, relative to the old Sinking Fund?—Mr. Pitt's compound interest, which would really swallow up the debt faster than was convenient for a commercial state;—Dr. Price's magical penny, which the revolution of not many ages would swell into a globe of gold larger than this earth;—these monstrous absurdities formed the basis of financial law-making for more than the quarter of a century; and it was not until long after they had become the contempt of the nation, that their true character was discovered by this House:—it was not until the year 1819, that Mr. Vansittart, by asking for three millions of additional taxes, "to create," as he said, "a real sinking fund," proclaimed to the awakened Parliament, that their old sinking fund had been a delusion, and the most pernicious delusion that ever distracted the finances of a state.

I come next to the famous "one-pound note and shilling" resolution. This resolution was a solemnly-proclaimed truth of the House of Commons of 1811; what is it now?—the standing jest of every speaker who is at a loss for an example of glorious absurdity; so much so, indeed, that the other night, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a moment of kindness to the memory of a dear, departed, and translated Chan-

cellor, declared that Mr. Vansittart, the propounder of that measure, was not the father of it, and that his reputation ought not to bear the load of that enormous folly.

But, to come to our own more immediate days, I beg Honourable Gentlemen to recollect the circumstances connected with the adoption of the Dead Weight scheme, in 1822. When first propounded to this House, on April 29th and May 1st of that year, it actually met with no opposition; on the contrary, it was hailed with considerable joy, and, amongst others, by the Member for London (Mr. T. Wilson);—more wonderful still, it was the subject of much panegyric from the lips of the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Huskisson). In the succeeding stages, some gentlemen (Mr. Brougham, Mr. A. Baring, Mr. Hume, and Mr. Ricardo) did point out the futility of the project, but the Ministerial phalanx still kept firm to the folly. The first division showed only thirty-five in the minority, against one hundred and fifteen approvers of the scheme; the second minority amounted only to fifty-four Members:—no more divisions took place; and we, at this moment, suffer under that which is an universally acknowledged disgrace to our statute-book, and still give our sanction to a pernicious, perplexing juggle, of which the Prime Minister of the House of Commons (Mr. Canning) made, the other night, this

ingenuous confession, that "*for his part, he did not understand it.*"

So much for the financial sapience of this House. If necessary, I could adduce many other instances of equal prudence in other departments, all tending to one melancholy fact, that the folly of the Minister of the day is the wisdom of Parliament. Let the man be ever so weak, and his project ever so unreasonable, he is still the dull divinity of the time, and his worshippers are no less numerous and devout than those of idols composed of more precious materials.

"Of whatever descent their Godhead be,
Stock—stone—or other homely pedigree;
In his defence, his servants are as bold
As if he had been born of beaten gold."

Indeed, I have sometimes thought, that the less respectable the object of worship, the more zealous the enthusiasm of the worshippers. Perhaps there is fancied to be a sort of magnanimity and generosity in the attachment to an imbecile master; but, let that be as it will, the vote is as certain for the dullest, as for the most enlightened Minister; and I have, myself, seen the largest majorities give sanction to proposals, recommended by speeches, received with the universal titter of the inmost rows of the Treasury benches themselves. And how can it be otherwise? During the session of

1822, a return was made of eighty-nine Members who sit in this House, receiving salaries, profits, and emoluments to the amount of £183,372; and a return was also made of fifty-nine Members holding commissions in the army and navy, of whom the pay was not stated. It is the fashion to say, that the impartiality of H. R. H. the present Commander-in-Chief makes it indifferent to an officer which way he votes;—I do not believe it. We have officers on our side the House, it is true, but where is the great majority of those holding commissions in the army and navy? Certainly ranged with Ministers, and certainly amongst their most faithful adherents. Nay, I will add, that even those with whom I have the honour to be associated, do not feel themselves perfectly free agents when questions touching their profession come before the House; they cannot help recognizing the influence to which they are to look up for promotion, and they are, besides, bound together by that "*esprit de corps*" which prevents them from merging the officer in the Member of Parliament: exceptions to this rule there may be, but the usual fact is what I have stated.

If, however, there should be any doubt as to the dependence of military and naval senators, there can be none as to the *eighty-nine* placemen and pensioners *mentioned* in the return. The Right Honourable the Foreign Secretary complained the

other night of the great scarcity of that description of gentlemen in this House:—allow me to ask him, how many would he have?—Are not the eighty-nine enough? Add to these, that every actual heavy-armed placeman has one or two light-armed relations, on debates of emergency, usefully skirmishing by his side. That the eighty-nine are enough, we have the best possible proof. An analysis was made of the majorities and minorities on fourteen great questions discussed in the years 1821 and 1822; and from that analysis (which I hold in my hand) it appears, that the said eighty-nine, the salaried officers of the Crown, were the real combatants who gained the day in all those fourteen questions against the popular part of the Representation. If this service was performed by the placemen now in Parliament, an addition to their number would be a superfluous encumbrance.

There is another most instructive deduction to be drawn from a similar analysis of the voters on thirty-six questions, in the same two years; the result is given in the following table *.

* This Table is extracted from a pamphlet by Mr. Marshall, called "Alphabetical List of the Members of the House of Commons," &c.—*Published by Miller, Fleet Street.*

From.	Members who vote.	For Ministers.	Against.	Both.	Not at all.	Total.
40	English Counties	25	37	10	8	80
12	Counties, and 12 towns, in Wales	13	9	1	1	24
89	Cities and Boroughs where election is open	57	107	5	11	180
114	Cities and Boroughs where election is close	151	41	5	28	225
2	Universities	4	0	0	0	4
33	Counties, and 66 Royal Burghs, in Scotland	25	11	0	9	45
32	Counties of Ireland	24	14	2	24	64
33	Cities and Boroughs of Ireland	21	7	0	8	36
		320	226	23	89	658

The simple inference from which statement is, that, as far as the people (properly so called) return Members to this House, they do attempt a controul on the measures of Government, but that the Government is enabled to counteract all their efforts by the Members who sit for those places where the election is in the hands either of one individual or a small portion of the community; and the conclusion from both of these examinations is, that rotten boroughs out of the House, returning placemen to the House, are the real basis of Parliamentary power. I wonder that any one should have the hardihood to deny the fact: it would be far more manly, far more sensible, to admit the fact, and to defend it.

The defence, indeed, of the Government, by corruption, requires more courage than ingenuity; for I know not how any man, far less an Englishman, can reconcile himself to those practices by which alone, under the present system, a Minister can hope to rule the Parliament, and, through the Parliament, the country. A virtuous mind scarcely dares to contemplate the baseness of those acts, a thorough knowledge and a skilful management of which, constitute the chief business of a parliamentary leader;—of those acts, which, to use the words of William Pitt, in his uncorrupted youth, make it almost impossible that any Minister should be an honest man;—of those acts with which the

more illustrious father of that statesman, scorned to be familiar, and a contempt of which provoked him to declare, that he would look at the Treasury only at a distance. A poet, who has been accused of indulging in a view of human nature much too melancholy, if not misanthropical, has told us,

"God hides from all of beings but himself
That hideous sight—a naked human heart."

But I am afraid, that the man whose fate it is to manage the majorities of Parliament is condemned to behold in disgusting, undisguised nakedness, the most secret infirmities of his species, and to become acquainted and to deal with those vices which are cautiously concealed from common view. What Minister was it, who said that it was fortunate so few men could rise to the higher offices of state, because it was fortunate so few men could be aware of the real baseness and corruption of mankind?—I believe it was Walpole; and well I recollect, in my younger days, hearing that sentiment repeated and commented upon by a gentleman who was, at that time, Prime Minister of England. It is not necessary to give an opinion of that gentleman's political career, but it is due to him to mention that which I heard at the time, and which subsequent inquiry makes me believe to be true,—that one of the principal causes of his fall from power was a refusal to garble the elections,

and to secure a Parliament exclusively his own, independent of the influence of his powerful predecessor. It may also be recollected, that the same Minister made himself sacred to ridicule by protesting, a little too ostentatiously perhaps, against an attack made on his purity, and by punishing a heedless suitor who endeavoured to contaminate him with a bribe.

In fact, in this Parliamentary Government there is no other mode of maintaining or directing power than that which was practised by the Walpoles and the Pelhams of other times; and what was done then grossly and openly, must be done now delicately and covertly. The vote is as venal, although the traffic is not quite so barefaced and undisguised. —I call upon the past and the present Secretaries of the Treasury to speak fairly: they need not be ashamed; the sin is not theirs, it belongs to the system.—I call upon them to confess, whether the compact phalanx which forms, or round which are formed, the majorities of Parliament, is not kept together by favours either paid or promised— either enjoyed or expected;—I ask them, Can any man presume to require the slightest participation in the good things which Government has to bestow, without giving a receipt in full at the table of this House, either in his own person, or in that of some near relation? The fact is too notorious to be denied; and I repeat, that those whose duty it

is to manage these transactions, must have before them a most humiliating spectacle, when they become intimately acquainted with the petty wants, and the low desires, and the base compliances of those who ought to be the high-minded, independent gentry of a free and fairly-governed country.

It is all in vain for the Foreign Secretary to tell us, as he did the other night, that he would scorn to govern by placemen—that he would scorn to govern, except through the just confidence of the country, expressed by an independent Parliament. That Right Honourable Gentleman may, when he acts as he ought, obtain the just confidence of his country; but he knows full well the truth of what I have been saying—he knows that if he would wield at will what has been called the "fierce," but which I would call the tame democracy of England, he must condescend to secure the usual support of Parliament by the usual means—he must follow the example of his predecessors—he must do what was done before him, and what will be done after him, as long as the present system shall endure.—In vain all his genius, in vain all his experience—in vain all his patient labour—in vain even that eloquence with which he delights his enraptured audience; they would be as but a feather in the balance, were the weight of ministerial patronage thrown into the opposite scale;—what was his fate once, would be his fate again, were he

stripped of the robes of power, and reduced to charm us only by the naked graces of truth and wisdom.

The Right Honourable Gentleman has furnished, indeed, several of the most striking instances by which we can form a judgment of the true quality of that influence which, and which alone, can be said to govern this assembly.—Let me select one: On June the 3rd, 1822, the Right Honourable Gentleman being, at that time, in the simple capacity of one of the most brilliant and persuasive orators that ever addressed an audience, moved for a clause in the Corn Importation Bill, commonly called the Grinding Clause. The landed interest, by its loudest and most sonorous organ (Sir T. Lethbridge), complained that they had been "ground" enough already; but the Marquess of Londonderry, then manager of majorities, supported the clause, and the House divided—*ayes* for grinding the country gentlemen, 149—*noes* for not putting them between the millstones, only 41. On the 10th of June, the question came on again: nothing had intervened; but when the Right Honourable Gentleman moved the bringing up of his clause, the Marquess, the manager, declared against the proceeding, and without deigning to argue the question, recommended his Right Honourable Friend to suspend his operations: but, in an evil hour, the Right Honourable Gentleman forgot how those things are brought

about here—he would accept of no compromise—he resolved to try his strength—he made a most ingenious speech—When, lo! the unhappy result!—under the wand of the manager, mute though he had been as Harlequin, the majority passed over to the other side—there they sat deaf as adders—they would not listen to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely—the forty-nine were swollen to one hundred and sixteen; and, under the process of the same enchantment, the hundred and forty-nine were reduced to a poor twenty-one—I myself being amongst them; so that I had the honour of finding myself in a sort of hackney-coach minority, cheek by jowl with the Right Honourable Gentleman:—and such would be his fate to-morrow, were he to drop down from the eminence where he now stands, to the position which he occupied on that luckless occasion; or, more hapless still, if his thunders, instead of rolling in the clear, the heaven of power, were to be heard only from this ill-omened left—the blighted regions of disaster and perpetual defeat.

I have, however, no difficulty in accounting for the feeling which induces Ministers and their partisans to keep out of sight the machinery which moves their system; and to conceal, if they can, even from themselves, for a moment, the real character of their parliamentary power. I wonder not to hear them break out, not unfrequently, into

the language of virtuous ambition, and boast of that fair influence over the minds of their fellow-countrymen which enables them to promote the prosperity of the nation, and the welfare of the world. They would, doubtless, be glad to escape from the trammels of corruption—they would prefer to reign

"——— Uncumbered with the venal tribe,
Smile without art, and win without a bribe."

Hence the declaration of the Right Honourable Foreign Secretary which I have before noticed—hence the virtuous scorn with which, the other day, the Chancellor of the Exchequer repelled the hint—that he clung to the paltry patronage of his office. Indeed, Sir! in proportion as the present condition of an English Minister must be crossed with many cares and vexations, and obnoxious to the disgusts inseparable from the vile traffic in which he deals, and the hard bargains he has to drive, so I cannot picture to myself any employment more noble—any employment more dignified, than that of a Patriot Minister in a Reformed Parliament—Conscious of the purity of his motives—possessed of power sufficient to satisfy any honest ambition—presiding over the destinies of a nation superior to any that ever yet challenged the admiration of mankind,—with what honest pride, with

what unmingled satisfaction, would such a Minister expound to an unbought and unbiassed Parliament the objects and the resources of his generous policy? How confidently would he appeal to the real representatives of the People for an approval, or, certainly, for a candid judgment of those measures by which he had laboured for the happiness and prosperity of their common country. Their cheers would then not only play round his head, but they would reach his heart—they would be, at once, the proof and the reward of his virtue—they would give to him, living and present, those honours which are usually decreed only to the absent or to the dead—they would enable him to anticipate the judgment of posterity, and would, as it were, unfold to him that page of history in which his own name would be found recorded amidst the fairest triumphs of liberty and civilization.

These, however, may be thought the reveries of a student, rather than the sober views of a practical politician; and perhaps I shall be told, that the Reformers have made little or no progress in the attainment of their object. It is true, we are not so sanguine as to promise ourselves a speedy fulfilment of our wishes—we do not fix the day, or point out the precise period, which shall be illustrated by the great event which we, nevertheless, confidently anticipate; but we have still a rational

a well-grounded hope, that our object will finally be accomplished; and that, by perseverance, courage, and a well-regulated zeal, we shall at last triumph over the patrons and promoters of corruption.

Sir, I have lived to see many surprising Reforms, which had I dared to foretell, I should have been ridiculed as the wildest and most enthusiastic of dreamers—I have lived to see our jury system and our criminal code revised by a Secretary of State—I have lived to see the wretched fabric of commercial prejudice and antiquated policy overthrown by another minister of the Crown—and, lastly, I have lived to see the important department of our foreign administration filled by a statesman who has burst asunder the bonds that chained us for so long to the despots of the Continent, and made this great country a partaker in the conspiracy against the liberties of mankind.

Having witnessed this extraordinary revolution—having seen such unhoped-for changes, what is there to make us despair of bringing about that greater Reform which the best and the wisest of our countrymen have declared to be essential to our happiness and our permanent glory?

I am sure that the wish for Reform is daily gaining ground. It is not to be expected that the same eagerness for any great change should be evinced at all periods; and as in times of tranquil-

lity the evils of misrepresentation cannot be felt so severely as in less prosperous days, so the call for a Reform cannot be equally urgent, under all circumstances and conditions of the country. It is only when the disease displays its most malignant symptoms that the demand for the remedy is most frequent and decisive. But if I can show you, as I can, that, on all fitting occasions, the great mass of the people express an opinion favourable to the change in question—if I can show you that, when any large class of the community are distressed, they, and the nation with them, resort almost instinctively, at once, to the only cure for the grievance—a Parliamentary Reform; then, I say, I have a right to declare that the cause is silently, but surely, working its way, and that the feeling now so prevalent, will soon become general, and, at last, universal. Yet, such has been the fact: when the manufacturers in the North were distressed, some years ago, what thousands of converts from all classes, were added to the ranks of Reform; not merely those who were themselves sufferers then adopted this salutary principle, but those of exalted station, who had been before blind to the inevitable evils of the present system, took the lead in the demand for a popular representation. When, subsequently, the agriculturists were depressed, Reform again gained disciples, and the most ardent admirers of things

as they are, began to discover that, by some means or the other, the people were not duly represented in this House. Amongst these late, but sincere and efficient converts, I may mention one—the Member for Somersetshire (Sir T. Lethbridge). Thus, the Reformers may boast that, in all emergencies, they receive an accession of numbers, both within and without the walls of Parliament; and thus, they may fairly hope to bring about their all-important change, by the usual operation of events carrying with them conviction to the minds of their fellow-countrymen. I repeat, it would accomplish this peaceably, and from within, in order that it may not come turbulently, and from without. I know, at the same time, that this abdication of their own throne, is hardly to be expected from any body of men. How seldom has a single individual resigned the ensigns of authority. The Diocletians and the Charleses were rather wearied with governing than satiated with power—*lassati, non satiati.* History furnishes only one Washington. It may seem therefore, too much to hope that those who now are in possession of the Borough Representation, and who, in fact, are the masters of the country, should be willing to diffuse amongst their fellow-citizens privileges which are now exclusively their own; and yet, such a self-denying ordinance would not only redound to the future advantage of these

individuals themselves, but would be generous, and noble, and glorious beyond all the examples of patriotism!

Nor need we despair—already have we seen some of that powerful body willing to consent to the honourable sacrifice. The Russells—the Cavendishes—the Grosvenors—and the Vanes, have only to be joined by the other monopolists of the elective franchise, and the great object would be immediately attained. The same age would then witness the Reformation of our jurisprudence—the adoption of a sound commercial policy—the recovery of that character which England so long maintained in the eyes of foreign nations;—and, lastly, the establishment of that real popular controul over the measures of Government, which alone can secure the continuance of all other advantages, and save us from a relapse into the miseries inseparable from a corrupt and delusive system of Representation.

FINIS.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

Navigation Laws.

SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HON. W. HUSKISSON

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

FRIDAY, THE 12th OF MAY, 1826,

ON

THE PRESENT STATE OF

THE SHIPPING INTEREST.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING THE SEVERAL ACCOUNTS REFERRED TO.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD & SON, PICCADILLY.

1826.

[*Two Shillings and Sixpence.*]

55·83

LONDON:
PRINTED BY J. L. COX, GREAT QUEEN STREET.

SPEECH,

&c. &c.

A PETITION from the Ship Owners of North Shields having been presented to the House, on the 27th of April, complaining of the Alterations recently made in the Navigation Laws, Mr. Huskisson took occasion to give notice, that he would, on an early day, enter into an Exposition of the present State of the Navigation of the United Kingdom. Accordingly, on the 12th of May,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose, and spoke, in substance, as follows:—

Sir;—In the course of the last session of Parliament, the honourable member for Grampound* frequently took occasion to indulge himself in certain oracular denunciations, foreboding the ruin of this country, as the result of the commercial and foreign Policy of the Government. At that period, the Commerce of the Country, it must be allowed, was at least sufficiently active, and the demand for mercantile Shipping greater, perhaps, than had ever before occurred. Whether from these circumstances, or from the solemn tone of mystery in which the honourable member's denunciations were delivered, they did not, at the time, make any considerable impression, either in this House, or out of doors.

Recently, however, a variety of Petitions has been presented to Parliament, from persons connected with the port of London, and with several other commercial towns, expressing their apprehensions, that the Shipping Interest is in a state of decay, and that the

* Mr. Robertson.

foundations of the prosperity and security of the country are, in consequence, likely to be undermined. When such impressions have been created in quarters, where the authority of the Petitioners, so far as their observations go, is entitled to the greatest consideration, I trust that no apology will be requisite, for claiming the attention of the House—or at least of that portion of it, who are now present—to a subject of such vital importance to the maritime power and greatness of the country. I am well aware of the reluctance which honourable gentlemen must feel to a statement, from its nature, necessarily dry and tedious; but, I am also aware, that the matter involved in it is of too much importance not to demand the deepest attention; for, if the fears expressed in the petitions on the table of the House be well-founded, it is scarcely necessary for me to say that the sooner an inquiry takes place the better.

The House, Sir, is aware, that our Navigation Laws have a two-fold object. First, to create and maintain in this country a great commercial Marine; and secondly,—(an object not less important in the eyes of statesmen)—to prevent any one other nation from engrossing too large a portion of the Navigation of the rest of the World.

Acting upon this System, the general rule of our policy has been to limit, as much as possible, the right of importing the productions of foreign countries into this country, either to Ships of the producing country, or to British Ships.

There certainly have been exceptions to this general rule, but it is the broad principle upon which the Navigation System of this country was founded; and it is obvious, that the motives for adopting that system were, first, that such portion of the carrying trade of foreign countries as does not devolve to British shipping should be divided, as equally as possible, amongst the other

maritime states, and not engrossed by any one of them in particular; and secondly, that countries entertaining relations of commerce with this country, and not possessing Shipping of their own, should export their produce to England in British Ships only, instead of employing the vessels of any third power.

But, when I state that the first object of our Navigation System was to create and uphold a great commercial marine, I think I may add, without fear of contradiction, that that object could not have been effected solely by regulations, restrictions, or prohibitions, however judiciously devised. The only true and durable foundation of a large commercial marine is to be laid in the means of affording to it beneficial employment. Without such employment—without, in short, extensive commerce, and great capital, to sustain and invigorate that commerce—no laws, merely protective, will avail. Whatever, therefore, contributes to extend the general commerce of the country must, incidentally,—I may almost say directly,—contribute also to improve and extend its navigation. These two great elements of our power and wealth are, of necessity, closely and intimately connected. I do not mean to say that their interests are always identified. I know they are not so. I know full well, that every thing which interferes with the freedom of commerce is more or less disadvantageous to the capitals which are employed in it. I am ready to admit, as consistent with this general principle, that the regulations of our Navigation System, however salutary they may be, must, more or less, act as a restraint on that freedom of commercial pursuit, which it is desirable should be open to those who have capital to employ. I am, however, at the same time, bound to say, that those regulations are founded on the first and paramount law of every State,—the highest ground of political necessity,—the necessity

of providing for our own safety and defence;—the necessity of being prepared to afford security to our numerous colonial possessions scattered throughout all the seas of the world;—the necessity of protecting the different branches of our widely spread commerce, against all the risks attendant on a state of war;—and, lastly, the necessity of preserving our ascendancy on the ocean, and thereby sustaining the high station in the rank of nations, which that ascendancy, more than any other circumstance, has given to this country.

Entertaining these opinions, I am as ready as any man can possibly be, to say that it is our duty, on all occasions, to look to the peculiar nature of this State necessity;—and that, whenever the interests of commerce and navigation cannot be reconciled, the feeling which ought to be uppermost in our minds should be,—(I, Sir, have no hesitation in stating it to be my feeling)—that the interests of Commerce, in all such instances, ought to give way, and those of Navigation to have the preference.

I trust that I have, in this brief statement, now placed myself fairly before the House. And, if the measures, recently adopted by His Majesty's Government, have laid this country open to the danger, with which, according to some, it is threatened, certainly I have imposed on myself no light task, in attempting to vindicate and defend those measures.

I begin with laying it down as a general position, that, in looking to the interest of the Ship Owner, we ought not to cramp Commerce beyond the degree which State necessity requires for the protection of our Navigation. I say that, apart from the considerations upon which the Navigation Laws were founded, we are bound not to depress one branch of industry, in order to give undue encouragement to another.

The questions, therefore, which we have to consider are these—

First; whether the alterations which have been made in the system of our Navigation Laws have, or have not, exposed the great public interests, for the support of which that system was established, to jeopardy and hazard?

Secondly; whether those alterations are such as to have placed any particular branches of the Shipping interest of the country in a situation of difficulty, such as to entitle them to specific consideration?

Thirdly; whether, in the alterations which have been adopted, His Majesty's Government have been actuated by a mere gratuitous desire to make experiments, and to try the effect of innovation; or whether those alterations, even if attended with some inconvenience to particular interests, were not called for by circumstances, in order to obviate greater inconvenience, which might have arisen to the general interest, if we had rigidly persisted in the course which we formerly pursued?

Now, Sir, before I join issue with those who call in question the necessity or expediency of the alterations which have been made in the system of our Navigation Laws, the House will, perhaps, permit me shortly to recall to their recollection the principal outlines of that system;—a course which is necessary, in order to mark more distinctly the alterations which have been made in it.

The Great Charter of the Navigation System of this country is the act of the twelfth of Charles the Second. The different modes which that Act provided for the encouragement of Shipping, may be arranged under the *five* following heads:—

First, the *Fisheries*. The ocean is a common field, alike open to all the people of the earth. Its productions belong to no particular nation. It was, therefore, our interest to take care that so much of those productions as might be wanted for the consumption of

Great Britain, should be exclusively procured by British industry, and imported in British ships. This is, so simple and reasonable a rule, that, in this part of our Navigation System, no alteration whatever has been made; nor do I believe that any will ever be contemplated.

The *second* object which the Navigation Laws had in view was to give, to the Shipping of this country, employment in what is called the *Coasting Trade.* When those laws were first passed, that trade was confined to England only, but, since we have become legislatively united with Scotland and with Ireland, it has embraced the whole of the British Islands. In this important part of our policy also there appears to be no motive for alteration. I shall, therefore, dismiss it with a single observation. The law, in this respect, remains unchanged, and will remain unchanged, so long as we have a desire to maintain a great commercial marine.

The *third* object of our Navigation System was the *European Trade.* The rule laid down, with regard to that trade, was—that the Ships of the other States of Europe were to be at liberty to bring, from any port in Europe, any article of European production, with the exception of certain articles, since known in trade by the name of the "enumerated articles." They amount in number to twenty-eight, and include those commodities which, being of the most bulky nature, employ the greatest quantity of shipping. With respect to these "enumerated articles," the exception was this —that they should not be brought to our ports in any other than British ships, or ships of the country in which they were produced, proceeding directly from such country to this. This was the general state of the law, in respect to European Commerce, from the time of its enactment, in the twelfth of Charles the Second, down to a recent period. Its provisions, however, were

more rigorous and exclusive towards Holland and the Low Countries. The regulations of that period were not framed merely for the preservation and encouragement of our own commerce, but also to weaken the powerful marine of Holland. Guided by this policy, our ancestors applied more severe measures towards the Dutch, than they thought necessary towards any other nation. In this spirit it was that they prohibited the importation, generally, of the productions of the other countries of Europe from Holland; instead of confining that prohibition to the twenty-eight enumerated articles.

The *fourth* object of our Navigation System was to regulate our *Commerce with Asia, Africa, and America.* The rule of law on this head was, that no article, the produce of either of those three quarters of the globe, should be allowed to be brought into an English port, except in a British ship.

The *fifth* and last part of the System of our Navigation Laws related to our *Colonies.* The principle on which we acted towards those Colonies was strictly to confine them, in all matters of Trade, to an intercourse with the Mother Country. They were not allowed to dispose of any of their produce, otherwise than by sending it in British vessels to this country. They were equally restricted from receiving any articles necessary for their consumption, except from this country, and in British bottoms.

This, I apprehend, is a fair summary of the main points of encouragement to the Shipping Interest of Great Britain, and of repression of the Shipping of other States, aimed at by our Navigation Laws, as those laws existed from the twelfth of Charles the Second down to the year 1783. In mentioning this latter period, I advert to it now as the commencement of that mighty change in the state of the world, the foundation of which had been then laid in the progress, and unfortunate issue,

of the American war. But, before I state what that change has been, so far as relates to Navigation and Commerce, I shall, perhaps, be permitted briefly to notice some of the circumstances which had prepared the way for this calamitous contest;—the result of which, as I shall shew presently, rendered the revision of our Navigation System a matter no longer of choice but of necessity;—a result, which, in its consequences, in less than half a century, has dragged after it nearly the whole Colonial System of the Old World.

Sir, the war which began in the year 1756, commonly called the Seven Years' War, was, strictly speaking, so far as relates to this country and to the Bourbon Governments of France and Spain, a war for colonial privileges, colonial claims, and colonial ascendancy. In the course of that war, British skill and British valour placed in the hands of this country Quebec and the Havannah. By the capture of these fortresses, Great Britain became mistress of the colonial destinies of the Western world. What use we made of our successes in that quarter, I will not now stop to inquire.

But if the proceedings of the Government of this country, after the peace of 1763, be closely examined, we shall find, that many of the causes which, ten years afterwards, led to the unfortunate rupture with our then colonies, now the United States of America, may be traced to our unseasonable attempts to enforce, in their most rigid and exclusive application, our Colonial and Navigation System. Every complaint, every petition, every remonstrance, against the oppressive tendency and vexatious consequences, of that system, on the part of the inhabitants of New England,—every temperate effort made by them to obtain some slight relaxation of the trammels that shackled their disposition to engage in commercial enterprize,—were only met, on the part of the British Government, by a constant succession of new

laws, enforcing still more restrictive regulations, framed in a spirit of still more vexatious interference. One instance of the character of that legislation will be sufficient; and I give it, as a slight specimen of the commercial jealousy which prevailed in our Councils, in reference both to the colonies and to Ireland.

A ship from our American possessions, laden with their produce, was stranded on the coast of Ireland. It will naturally be supposed, that the cargo was landed, and the ship repaired, in that country. No such thing. The law compelled the owners to send another English ship from England, for the purpose of bringing away the cargo:—a cargo which, not improbably, might then be wanted in the Irish market, and which was, perhaps, destined to be ultimately consumed there, after having been trans-shipped in a port of that country, landed in an English port, and again re-shipped to Ireland.

This is a sample of the real grievances under which our American colonies laboured. Such a state of law could not fail to engender great dissatisfaction, and much heart-burning. It is generally believed, that the attempt to tax our American colonies, without their consent, was the sole cause of the separation of those Colonies from the mother country. But, if the whole history of the period between the year 1763 and the year 1773 be attentively examined, it will, I think, be abundantly evident, that, however the attempt at taxation may have contributed somewhat to hasten the explosion, the train had been long laid, in the severe and exasperating efforts of this country, to enforce, with inopportune and increasing vigour, the strictest and most annoying regulations of our Colonial and Navigation Code. Every petty adventure in which the Colonists embarked, was viewed, by the merchants of this country, and the Board of Trade of that day, as an encroachment on the commercial monopoly of Great Britain.

The professional subtlety of Lawyers, and the practical ingenuity of Custom-House Officers, were constantly at work, in ministering to the jealous, but mistaken, views of our sea-ports. Blind to the consequences elsewhere, they persevered in their attempts to put down the spirit of commercial enterprize in the people of New England, until those attempts roused a very different spirit; —that spirit which ventured to look for political independence from the issue of a successful rebellion.

The result is well known. The country found itself engaged in a civil war. That war, in its progress, involved us in the greatest difficulty and embarrassment. It was terminated by submitting to humiliations such as, I trust to God, the Crown of Great Britain will never again be exposed to.

America was not the only part of our dominions in which we were called to pay the penalty of humiliation. Ireland, towards which we had acted in the same spirit of commercial jealousy as towards our American colonies, took advantage of our difficulties, and refused any longer to hold her industry and trade subject to our system of exclusion. To the Parliament and Volunteers of Ireland, we had also to capitulate. If the capitulation was mortifying to the pride of England, fortunately it neither compromised our honour, nor involved any concession beyond what was strictly a debt of justice to Ireland. The benefits of our Commercial and Navigation System were extended to her. She was permitted to trade direct to the Colonies, and placed rather upon the footing of a partner than that of a dependent, in the concerns of the British empire.

If I have gone into this detail, I have done so, because it appeared to me necessary, as bearing, in a peculiar manner, upon the question now before the House. The immediate lesson which I draw from it is this,—that it is a part of political wisdom, when danger is foreseen,

not supinely to wait for its approach, but, as far as possible, to take timely measures for its prevention.

The peace with America gave the first great blow to the Navigation System of this country. There had now arisen an independent state in the New World. Our colonies had fought for, and had taken, a station in the rank of nations. They had now interests in Navigation to attend to, and a commerce of their own to protect. It therefore became imperative on this country, unless we were prepared to relinquish all trade with America, to conform to circumstances. It was impossible for us, in this new state of things, to enforce the system of our Navigation Laws, which, until then, we had so rigidly insisted upon. That part of the System which provided, that none of the productions of Asia, Africa, or America, should be imported into England, except in British vessels, could no longer be adhered to.

After the peace of 1783, and before the General Congress of America had established that system of Government, under which the people of the United States now live,—a work which was not completed until the year 1787,—each of the different States, then composing the Union, was at liberty to act independently of the others, in matters relating to its trade with Foreign countries. Accordingly, almost every state established a different rule of commercial intercourse with this country. The general character, however, of their legislation was conceived in a spirit of peculiar hostility (not unnaturally, perhaps, so soon after the exasperation excited by civil discord) against trade with Great Britain. In some of those States, indeed, British merchants were prohibited from trading with them altogether: in others, heavier duties were specifically imposed upon British merchandize; and in all, a desire was manifested to give a decided preference to the goods of other countries.

This state of things continued until the year 1787, when the General Congress met, and one uniform system of commercial policy was laid down. By that system, a heavy blow was aimed at the Navigation of this country. It was resolved, that all foreign ships, trading to America, should pay half a dollar,—which was afterwards raised to a dollar,—per ton duty, beyond what was paid by national ships. And further, that goods imported in foreign vessels should pay a duty of ten per cent., over and above what was demandable on the same description of goods imported in American vessels.

This system,—in the adoption of which, the Americans had, in a considerable degree, followed the example of their English ancestors,—was likely to become seriously prejudicial to the commerce and navigation of this country. The proper authorities, therefore, set about considering what was to be done in order to counteract it. The Board of Trade had recourse, for advice, to the most eminent merchants and practical men; and various projects were started on the occasion. One plan proposed to give a bounty on all goods exported to America in British ships. Another, to impose a duty on all articles carried out of this country in American ships. A third, to retaliate upon the Americans, and, following their example, to lay a specific duty on American ships, and on goods imported in those ships. These and various other plans, having the same object in view, on being sifted and examined, were found to be open to insuperable objections. It was shewn that, without attaining their object, they would prove injurious to the commerce and manufactures of this country; and all of them were, in consequence, abandoned.

After this inquiry, and a long struggle to counteract the Navigation System of America, without in any degree relaxing our own, this country found it necessary to adopt the system of Reciprocity, on which,

since the year 1815, the commercial intercourse between the two countries has been placed; namely, equality of all charges upon the ships belonging to either country in the ports of the other, and a like equality of duty upon all articles the production of the one country, imported into the other, whether such importation be made in the ships of the one or the other. In the practical consequences of this arrangement, our adherence to another part of our Navigation Laws, instead of serving, appears to me to have shackled the Shipping Interest of this country. Our law still provides that goods, the produce of Asia, Africa, or America, shall not be imported in foreign ships, unless they be the ships of the country of which the goods are the produce. The Americans retaliate this restriction by applying it to all goods the produce of Europe. An American ship trading to this country has, in consequence, a great advantage over a British ship trading to America. The American vessel, on her voyage to England, is freighted with a cargo wholly produced in the United States. She has nothing else to bring here. For her return to America she may load in the ports of this country with a cargo, partly the produce or manufacture of Great Britain, and partly of any other country. The British ship is debarred from this advantage. Her cargo, when trading to the United States, must be exclusively of British origin. For instance, an American vessel, at the port of Liverpool, may take nine-tenths of her cargo in articles the produce of Lancashire, and the remainder may be made up of brandies, wines, or the produce of any other part of the world, to be procured at Liverpool. But, if an English ship, proceeding to the United States, were to take a single cask of brandy, or a single pipe of wine, she would be liable to seizure and forfeiture. Is it not, therefore, fairly to be presumed, that a further relaxation of our system, to

the extent of allowing the importation, from the United States, of goods, the produce of any part of the world, in American shipping, on condition of the like privilege being granted to British ships in the ports of the United States,—however departing from the policy of our ancestors,—would be rather an advantage than an injury to the Shipping Interest.

Shortly after the commercial legislation of the United States had assumed, in 1787, a regular shape, and an uniform character, the war of the French Revolution broke out; a war which lasted nearly a quarter of a century. The course of this war was marked by so many strange and anomalous circumstances, both by land and upon the ocean;—so large a portion of the continent of Europe, including nearly all its trading and maritime communities, became subjected to the despotism of one great military power;—that despotism was exerted in so extraordinary a manner to crush Maritime Commerce;—that it would be vain to enter upon the history of our Navigation System, or of that of other countries, during this long contest. It is, however, certain that the commerce of the United States of America, which were the only, at least almost the only, neutral power that could trade in safety, was greatly benefited by the war. It is equally true, that Great Britain, being well able to protect her commercial marine, in consequence of her vast naval superiority, did extend that commercial marine, in spite of all difficulties, whilst that of the other countries of Europe was greatly reduced. It is unnecessary for me, as the facts are so well known, to dwell further on the circumstances of that war. We may, therefore, as far as relates to the present question, pass over the period between 1792 and 1815.

At the latter period, peace being restored, and with it, the independence of the States which had been incorporated with France, the commerce of the world began

to revert to its ancient channels. The nations of Europe, whose flags had, for so long a series of years, disappeared from the ocean, were now naturally anxious that their own trade should be carried on in their own ships. This gave a check to the shipping of the United States, which was also felt by the shipping of this country. Perhaps in a greater degree by our own shipping, in consequence of the restitution of several extensive and valuable Colonies, which we had captured and held during the war.

Besides this material circumstance, there were others, to which I will briefly advert, which had a natural and inevitable tendency to interfere with, and diminish, the employment for shipping in this country.

The first to which I shall allude is the Abolition of the Slave Trade. They who are old enough to remember,—and I am one of the number,—the early debates which took place on this subject, will recollect, that the arguments in opposition to the measure were grounded chiefly on the danger with which it threatened the Shipping Interests of the country. The necessity of kidnapping cargoes of slaves on the coast of Africa was, at that time, as coolly defended, on the score of encouragement to our Marine, as the taking of cod-fish on the Banks of Newfoundland could be at the present day. That traffic was, however, abolished in 1806, and happy I am, that the interests of humanity, and the honour of the English name, were from that year, no longer sacrificed to the plea of the Shipping Interest; though I may, I think, fairly adduce the Abolition of the Slave Trade as having taken away one source of employment.

After the general pacification of Europe, but before we dismantled our fleet, we insisted on the powers of Barbary desisting from the practices of maritime warfare, carried on by cruizers under their flags, in the Mediterranean. These corsairs were constantly taking

prisoners, either for the sake of ransom, or for the purpose of carrying them into slavery.—Whilst this system was tolerated, scarcely any trading vessels, those of Great Britain excepted, could navigate that sea in safety! In this state of things, it was highly honourable to this country to have used her naval power, the dread of which had constantly ensured respect for her own flag,—for the purpose of procuring an equal degree of security for the navigation of all Christian states. This was no positive duty which we were bound to perform. We were not called upon by any international engagement, nor by any moral obligation, as in the case of the Slave Trade. The act was one of spontaneous generosity. But, however high-minded in principle, it is not the less true that the result of our interference was injurious to the Shipping Interest of this country, in the Mediterranean. Since the bombardment of Algiers, the flag of every petty state bordering on that sea, floats in equal security with our own. I am not accurately informed what was the quantity of British Shipping employed in the carrying and coasting trade of those states before this change, but I have heard it stated, in this House, by one likely to be well informed,—the late Mr. Marryat,—that from eight to ten thousand British seamen, and from seven to eight hundred British vessels, were engaged in that commerce. Consequently, to that extent has the employment for British ships been diminished in the Mediterranean.

But these were not the only circumstances that at the close of the late war, which had a tendency to reduce the amount of our shipping. With the termination of hostilities, there was necessarily a diminished demand for ships in the public service. The greatest proportion of those which had been taken up as hired transports was discharged. I have obtained a statement

of their number and tonnage, as they stood at the termination of the war—and of the number and tonnage of those employed at the present period. The diminution is not less than 1,226 vessels, amounting to 270,382 tons.

In the next place, we had to sell out of the King's service a number of vessels, which were no longer wanted in the Navy. I do not advert to ships of the line, or to frigates of the large class, which are always sold, subject to the condition, that they shall be broken up. Of this latter description of ships I take no notice; but confine my statement to vessels of smaller burthen, adapted to other purposes than those of war, and which are consequently not required to be so broken up. Of this class, there has been sold no less a number than 333, the amount of their tonnage being 193,530 tons. So that, if we add to the number of transports discharged the number of ships sold, we shall find that his Majesty's Government have set free, to compete with the commercial marine of the country, 1,559 vessels, amounting in tonnage to 363,912 tons; a quantity nearly equal to one-fourth of the whole shipping of the country, as it stood in the year 1793, at the commencement of the late war.

But this is not all. If the difference of circumstances under which trade is carried on, in time of peace and in time of war, be taken into consideration, we shall find that, in the former period, a much smaller number of vessels is required for the same extent of transactions, than in the latter. In time of peace, the moment a ship has landed her cargo, she is at liberty to sail again, and is dispatched on another voyage as soon as possible. During the last war, we were obliged, in almost all cases, to place our merchant ships under the protection of convoy; and, in spite of all the exertions of the Admiralty, it was frequently difficult to provide convoys, as expeditiously as the interests of commerce would

have required. Four or five hundred merchantmen were sometimes collected together at one point, before the required protection could be afforded to them. And when, at length, these large bodies of shipping did proceed to sea, they were under the necessity of keeping together; so that the rate of sailing, during a whole voyage, was necessarily to be regulated by the progress of the slowest sailing vessel. In time of peace it is otherwise. Ships can then traverse the ocean singly, without fear of interruption; and in their passages from one port to another, as well as in loading and unloading, every exertion is used to ensure dispatch. An instance occurred lately, at Liverpool, of a large West-Indiaman arriving from Barbadoes, landing her cargo, and sailing again for that island, in the course of one week. The multiplication and convenience of Docks have also greatly contributed to obviate delay in the discharge and loading of vessels. Upon the whole, I shall not be overstating the proportion when I say that two-thirds of the number of vessels, necessary in time of war, are fully sufficient for all the purposes of the same extent of commerce, in time of peace.

There is yet another circumstance to which, before I quit this part of the subject, I must refer. I mean the alteration made in the year 1815, in the foreign Corn trade of the country. During the war, this trade afforded regular employment to no inconsiderable quantity of shipping, but since the law has been altered, and the ports have been generally shut against the importation of foreign corn, that employment has ceased. In a desultory intercourse, like that which alone can exist under the present law, the opening of the ports being sudden, and, in most cases, uncertain, till the quarterly average is declared, it is almost impossible that the trade, when permitted, should not fall into the hands of the foreign ship-owner. The period for which

the ports may continue open being limited to a few weeks, the persons who wish to take advantage of that opening, instead of fitting out ships in our ports, send their orders to the continent, with directions to forward the corn by any vessels that can be procured on the spot. Hence the almost exclusive employment of foreign shipping in this occasional trade.

I must now crave the indulgence of the House while I shew what was the situation of this country, with regard to its Shipping, previous to the last war. In 1792, one of the most prosperous years which the country has ever known,—the year immediately preceding the breaking out of that war, in which we were called upon to make such immense efforts to maintain our naval superiority,—the number of registered ships in the several ports of the British empire was 16,079; the amount of their tonnage 1,540,145 tons. In the present year, that is to say, in the year ended the 31st of December 1825, the number of registered ships was 24,174; and the amount of their tonnage 2,542,216 tons; shewing an increase of one-third in the number of ships, and of two-fifths in the tonnage, within that period.

Having stated the number and tonnage of our registered vessels at the commencement of the late war, I will now shew what they were at its close. In 1815, the number was 24,860, and the amount of their tonnage 2,681,276 tons. It appears, therefore, that there has been, since the conclusion of the war, a decrease in our shipping of 686 vessels, and 139,060 tons; but I have, I think, shewn satisfactorily that, upon the return of peace in 1815, our commercial marine was greatly in excess of what was requisite in the then altered situation of the country.

As connected with this part of our inquiry, it is material to ascertain the number of vessels that have been

built in the British dominions, since the termination of the late war, and to compare it with the number built in former periods. It is with much satisfaction that I find myself enabled to assure the House that, taking the last thirty-seven years, the number of ships annually built in Great Britain, instead of decreasing, has increased. The documents which prove the correctness of this statement are already upon the Table of the House, with the exception of those for the year 1812, which, in consequence of the calamitous fire at the Custom House in that year, could not be procured.

From the returns which I hold in my hand, I find that the number of ships built, last year, in the several ports of the British dominions, exceeded the number built in any one year of the whole period to which I have referred. In the year 1814, when the War with France first terminated, the number of ships built was 818, the amount of their tonnage 95,976 tons. Last year, the number of ships built was 1,212, the amount of their tonnage 171,827 tons. So that, in fact, the tonnage of the ships built last year was little short of double the tonnage of those built in the year 1814, and exceeded considerably that of any year upon record.

These details, however dry in themselves, appear to me to involve the elements of the whole question, and to afford the best criterion by which a judgment can be formed, how far the complaints which represent our Shipping to have been in a state of rapid decline are well-founded. The only other comparison growing out of the documents which I hold in my hand, is that of the number of ships which have entered inwards, and cleared outwards, to and from the ports of Great Britain, in the several years since the alterations which are objected to in our Navigation Laws.

I have provided myself with a return exhibiting this comparison from the year 1814 down to the last

years; and I entreat the House to bear in mind that the complaint in the petition on the table is that in consequence of the alteration made in the Navigation Laws within the last three or four years, the employment of British Shipping has *decreased*, and that of foreign vessels trading with this country has *increased*. I will confine the comparison to the returns of vessels, British and Foreign, entering *inwards*; and for this reason—that it is not necessary for ships, leaving our ports in ballast, to clear out at all, and therefore the returns exhibiting the number of vessels cleared *outwards* must be very imperfect.

From the returns which I find that, in the year ended the 25th of December 1824, the number of British vessels that entered inwards was 19,164, and the amount of their tonnage 2,364,249 tons. The number of Foreign vessels that entered inwards during the same year, was 5,280, the amount of their tonnage being 694,880 tons. In the year ended the 25th of December 1825,—a year in which the modifications made in our Navigation Laws were in full operation,—the number of British vessels that entered inwards was 21,786; the amount of their tonnage 2,786,844 tons. The number of Foreign vessels that entered inwards in that year had increased to 6,561, and the amount of their tonnage to 892,601 tons. The year 1825, was, it is well known, a year of unexampled speculation in every branch of commerce, creating an unusual demand for shipping, not only in the ports of this country, but throughout Europe. And what, as regards British Shipping, was the result? Why, that the positive increase of British vessels entered inwards, as compared with the year 1824, was 2,622; and of tonnage 422,595 tons; while the increase of Foreign vessels entered inwards, during the same year, was in number 1,281; and in tonnage 197,721 tons. This at least is no unsatisfactory result. The increased employment of British

shipping alone in that year exceeds the aggregate increase of employment to the shipping of all other nations of the world.

But as the attention of the House has been specially referred, by the Petitioners, to the state of the trade between this country and the northern parts of Europe, and more especially to the trade with Prussia, I must beg leave to enter rather more specifically into that part of their case. I am happy to be able to state, upon the authority of documents which will be laid on the table of the House, that by a comparison between the British and Prussian Shipping engaged in the trade between the two countries, during the years 1824 and 1825, the increase of British was much greater than that of Prussian Shipping in the latter year. The number of British Ships trading to the ports of Prussia in the year 1824, was 470; in the year 1825, 942; being more than double the number of the preceding year. The number of Prussian ships which came to this country, in the year 1824, was 682; in 1825, the number was 887; being an increase of about one-fourth.

Such, Sir, if any inference is to be deduced from the trade between Prussia and Great Britain for the last year, is the comparative growth of British and Prussian Navigation. I am aware that the danger of losing our carrying trade, from the Ports of the Baltic, has been the main source of the jealousy felt by the Shipping Interest, and of their complaints to this House. The comparison between British and Prussian shipping for the two or three last years, and especially that of the year 1825, has certainly not borne out their predictions, or justified their alarms. But it would be uncandid to deny, that we have not yet sufficient experience to warrant a positive conclusion that, prospectively, the Shipping of the Prussian ports may not gain ground in the competition with our own. I am the more induced to

make this remark, as, from the excessive excitement, and over-trading of the last year, I am ready to acknowledge that, taken by itself, it cannot be considered as affording an estimate for the future: neither, on the other hand, perhaps, will it be fair, in 1827, to form such an estimate from the experience of the present year, which, it is much to be feared, as a natural consequence of late excess, will be one of severe depression in the trade of this country.

Having adverted to the apprehensions which are entertained respecting our Trade with the ports of the Baltic, I have naturally been most anxious to sift to the bottom this important part of our inquiry. I know no mode so satisfactory of ascertaining what have been the fluctuations in the trade, either as respects our own share of it, at different periods, or the proportion which that share bears to the trade of other Powers with the ports of the Baltic, as a reference to the annual Returns of the vessels, of all nations, which have passed the Sound in a given number of years. Fortunately, the State Paper Office has furnished me with these returns. This account I hold in my hand, from the year 1783 to the year 1792, with the exception of the year 1789; the returns for which year have been either lost or mislaid. I also hold in my hand a similar account, from the year 1816 to the year 1825, both inclusive. The comparison of these two periods, each of ten years, (both periods of peace) appears to me to afford a fair illustration of this branch of trade. I am happy to say that the result will be found highly satisfactory; for it will be seen that the number of British Ships which passed the Sound in the year 1825, was not only positively greater than it was in any one of the twenty years to which I have referred, but that its proportion, with respect to the number of vessels from all other nations, was equally favourable to this country. It would be going into an unnecessary detail to give the numbers for every year of the twenty. I shall, therefore,

confine myself to the five last years. The total number of ships which passed the Sound was:—

	British Ships.	Ships of all other Nations.
In the year 1821	2,819	6,358
Do. 1822	3,097	5,386
Do. 1823	3,016	6,187
Do. 1824	3,540	6,978
Do. 1825	5,186	7,974

So that, looking at the proportion which Great Britain has been able to retain of the Trade of the Baltic, it appears that, last year, when the total number of vessels which passed the Sound exceeded that of any former year, British Shipping engrossed considerably more than one-third of the whole navigation of that sea, and had increased very nearly two-fifths, compared with the average of the four preceding years. The papers to which I have referred I propose to move for, so that the House will be able to judge from them of the correctness of my statement.

In consequence of the restoration of peace, the demand for shipping, as I have already remarked, was much diminished, and the rates of freight were considerably lowered after the year 1815. This gave rise to great complaints on the part of the Shipping Interest. In the hope of finding some remedy for their difficulties, the House, in the year 1820, appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the state of our Foreign Commerce. My Right Honourable Friend, the Master of the Mint, now absent, I am sorry to say, from indisposition, presided over the labours of that Committee, and prosecuted the inquiry, in several succeeding sessions, with a degree of zeal, diligence, and ability, for which the country is greatly indebted to my Right Honourable Friend. One change recommended by that Committee, in the Navigation Laws, was to the following effect;—that whereas certain goods, which I have already described as known

ind trade under the designation of "*enumerated articles*," could only be imported in British ships, or in ships of the country in Europe of which they were the produce, and directly from that country, it was the opinion of the Committee that the law ought to be so far relaxed, as to allow the importation of these articles in the ships of any country into which they had been previously imported.

The recommendation of the Committee was adopted by the Legislature. That this relaxation has been beneficial to our Commerce and Navigation is now, I believe, placed beyond all doubt. It afforded a great facility to the execution of another project, emanating from the same Committee, and since also carried into effect;—that of establishing a general system of Warehousing, so as to make this country a place of entrepôt for all foreign commodities. It was obviously impossible to give full scope to this system, unless we were prepared to allow greater latitude to the admission of foreign goods. The superior capital and credit of this country afford inducements to send those goods here, and their being deposited in British warehouses gives a facility to the British Merchant and Ship-owner to supply the demand for them in other parts of the world, through the medium of British adventure and British shipping, instead of their being sent directly to those parts in foreign shipping, from the countries of Europe in which such goods are produced.

It was desirable, therefore, for the interest of our Foreign trade, that we should no longer rigidly adhere to that part of the Navigation Act which prohibited the importation of the "enumerated articles," if brought from countries other than those of which they were the produce. Such a restraint, it is hardly necessary to say, could not fail frequently to prevent speculations of trade, in which the spirit of British enterprize would

have otherwise engaged, or to throw those speculations into other channels. It interfered, likewise, to prevent the advantageous assortment of cargoes, and other commercial arrangements, as well in foreign ports as in the ports of this country; and, in this and many other ways, contributed, directly and indirectly, to diminish the employment for British shipping.

Another alteration in our Navigation System has since been adopted, which certainly ought not to have been so long delayed. This alteration consists in putting the trade between Great Britain and Ireland upon the footing of a Coasting trade. Every gentleman must, I think, see that, from the time at least of the union of the two countries, it was desirable that their interests and commercial system should be identified as much as possible. From that period it was absurd to consider the commercial intercourse with Ireland as a part of our foreign trade, and to subject the shipping employed in it to the restrictive regulations and higher charges of that trade.

But these were not the only deviations from the ancient rules of our Navigation System. The revolutions which have occurred in the political state of the world, in our time, rendered other changes indispensable. There has grown up over the whole continent of America, a situation of affairs similar to that which the United States presented, after their separation from the Mother Country. This change, from a colonial to an independent existence, necessarily draws after it, in each particular case, the application of the new rule, which, as I have already stated, unavoidably grew out of the independence of the United States.

The first application of that rule occurred in respect to Brazil. From the moment when, in 1808, the House of Braganza transferred the seat of empire to Brazil, that country virtually ceased to be a colony. Great Britain

had no choice but to apply the European principles to the Commerce and Navigation of Brazil, though out of Europe, and to admit Portuguese Shipping,—and, since the separation of Portugal and Brazil, Brazilian shipping,—coming from that country into our ports, upon the same footing as the ships of any other independent nation.

This principle has been extended, from time to time, as new States have risen up in America. When I heard the Honourable Member for Grampound complain that, in our Treaty of Commerce and Navigation with Columbia, and in that with Buenos Ayres, we had consented to place their navigation upon an equality with our own, I certainly listened to this charge with no small degree of surprise, being satisfied that what the Honourable Gentleman censured so severely, was the very wisest principle that this country could adopt. Those States were anxious to encourage their commercial Marine, by granting exclusive advantages to their own shipping, and imposing certain restrictions upon that of this country. This disposition was frequently manifested by the Ministers of those States in the course of our discussions with them; and certainly there are not wanting some who are constantly endeavouring to excite in these new countries a jealousy of the Naval Power of Great Britain; instigating them to adopt a separate and novel code of maritime law for the New World, and to frame their Navigation System upon principles of giving a preference to their own shipping, and to that of America generally, over the shipping of this country, and of Europe.

Have we acquiesced in these views? Have we compromised any of the acknowledged principles of Maritime Law? No, Sir—Whilst we have explicitly refused to listen to any such compromise, we have disarmed all suspicion as to our commercial pretensions,

by frankly declaring, that we sought no exclusive advantages for British ships or British trade, and that the principle of our intercourse with the New States, as with the Old States, of the World, would be that of a fair and equal reciprocity.

This brings me to the *gravamen* of the charge made against his Majesty's Government; namely, the step taken by them, in furtherance of this principle, by the introduction of a law, enabling the Crown, with the advice of the Privy Council, to remit all discriminating duties on the goods and shipping of such countries, as may agree to impose no higher charges or duties upon British ships, and the goods imported therein, than upon their own ships, and the like goods imported in such ships.

If the system of discriminating Duties for the encouragement of Shipping were a secret known to this country alone; if a similar system were not, or could not be, put in force in every other country, I should not be standing here to vindicate the measure to which I have just referred, and the present policy of his Majesty's Government. So long as, in fact, no independent trading community existed out of Europe, and so long as the old Governments of Europe looked upon these matters,—if they looked to them at all,—as little deserving their attention, and were content, either from ignorance or indifference, not to thwart our System, it would have been wrong to disturb any part of it. But is this the present state of the world? Did not the United States of America, in the first instance, for the purpose of raising to themselves a great commercial Marine, and of counteracting our Navigation Laws, adopt, in their utmost rigour, the rules of those laws, and carry, even further than we had ever done, in respect to foreign Ships, this principle of discriminating duties against our Shipping? Can we shut our eyes to the fact that

other nations have followed, or are following, their example? Do we not see them, one after the other, taking a leaf out of our own book? Is not every Government in Europe, if possessed of sea-ports, now using its utmost endeavours to force a trade, and to raise up for itself a commercial Marine? Have we not boasted of our Navigation Laws, till we have taught other nations to believe (however erroneous that belief), that they are almost the only requisite, or, at least, the *sine quâ non*, of commercial wealth and of maritime power? Did these vauntings excite no envy, no spirit of rivalry, no countervailing opposition in other countries? Did the success of the United States of America create no desire in those countries to follow her example?

It would be worse than idle, it would be dangerous, to dissemble to ourselves the great changes which have been wrought, since the establishment of American independence, in the views and sentiments of Europe, upon all matters connected with commerce and navigation. They now occupy a leading share in the attention of almost every Government. They are everywhere a subject of general inquiry and interest. Even in countries, of which the institutions are least favourable to the discussion of political topics, these questions are freely discussed, and, by discussion, the influence of public opinion is made to bear upon the measures and policy of their Governments.

In this altered state of the world, it became our duty seriously to inquire, whether a system of commercial hostility, of which the ultimate tendency is mutual prohibition,—whether a system of high discriminating duties upon foreign ships, with the moral certainty of seeing those duties fully retaliated upon our own shipping, in the ports of foreign countries,—was a contest in which England was likely to gain, and out of

which, if persevered in, she was likely to come with dignity or advantage? I will lay aside, for the moment, every consideration of a higher nature, moral or political, which would naturally lead us to look with some repugnance to the engaging in such a contest. I will equally lay aside all consideration for the interest of our manufacturers, and for the general well-being of our population, who, as consumers, would obviously have to pay for this system of custom house warfare, and reciprocal restriction; and I will view the question solely in reference to the Shipping Interest. In this comparatively narrow, but, I admit, not unimportant, view of the question, I have no difficulty in stating my conviction,—a conviction at which I have arrived after much anxious consideration,—that, in the long-run, this war of discriminating duties, if persevered in on both sides, must operate most to the injury of the country which, at the time of entering upon it, possesses the greatest commercial marine. How can it be otherwise? What are these discriminating duties, but a tax upon commerce and navigation? Will not the heaviest share of that tax fall, therefore, upon those who have the greatest amount of shipping and of trade?

Before we embark in such a contest, we owe to the character of the country, as well as to its interests, to satisfy ourselves,—first, that it is necessary for its welfare; and, secondly, that once committed to the trial with all the commercial powers of Europe, the country would have the firmness and fortitude necessary to go through with it. Do not let Gentlemen too hastily decide this last point in the affirmative. Let them call to their recollection the famous Orders in Council;—let them, above all, bear in mind, that we have yet had but one trial of this discriminating warfare,—the trial with the United States of America,—and that we came

out of that trial, after several years' perseverance, by conceding the very object, for the maintenance of which it had been carried on. Would it be politic, or dignified, to engage in a like struggle in Europe, with the risk of arriving at the same result? In commerce, in navigation, in naval power, and maritime pretensions, the United States are our most formidable rival; and we are now arraigned for not withholding from Prussia and Denmark, what parliament and the country, ten years ago, concurred in yielding to America!

Under what circumstances did England found her Navigation System? When her commercial marine was, comparatively, insignificant, her wealth inconsiderable, before manufactures were established, and when she exported corn, wool, and other raw materials.—When, on the other hand, Holland and the Netherlands were rich, possessed of great manufactures, and of the largest portion of the carrying trade of Europe and the world. What has followed? The commercial marine of the latter countries has dwindled away, and that of Great Britain is now immense. But, in the progress of the change, England is become the great seat of manufactures and trading wealth, frequently importing, and never exporting, corn; drawing raw materials from, and sending out manufactured goods to, all parts of the world. This was our state, though in a far less degree than at present, when America became independent. She started by applying towards us the system, which we had applied towards Holland. She was then poor, with a very small commercial marine, without manufactures, having corn and raw materials to export;—and we know what her shipping now is. Let Gentlemen reflect on these circumstances, before they decide that it is necessarily wise to enter upon a similar contest with other poor and unmanufacturing countries. Let them serious-

ly consider, whether a system of discriminating duties,—now that the exclusive *patent* by which we held that system is expired,—is not the expedient of such a country as I have described, rather than the resource of one which already possesses the largest commercial marine in the world. They will then see, that it may possibly be a wise policy to divert such countries from that system, rather than to goad them on, or even leave them a pretext for going into it.

Let us for a moment, however, suppose that, at all hazards, we have embarked in this warfare of counteracting duties. They who recommend this policy have no right to assume that, in the progress of the struggle, the discriminating duties imposed in the foreign country, (Prussia, for example) on British shipping, will not be, at least, equivalent to the like duties levied in England on Prussian shipping. The United States did not content themselves with equivalency,—they went more boldly to work;—so might any European power. If equivalent duties be established on both sides, how will they operate? It is clear that the shipping of each country will stand in the same relative situation to that of the other, as if no such duties had been imposed; the duties, therefore, in both countries will be a tax, and a very objectionable one, upon the interchange of their respective productions. But, as those productions are different, these duties will affect differently the industry of the contending parties. Our principal exports to the North of Europe are manufactured goods and colonial produce;—our imports, timber, hemp, flax, pitch, tar (occasionally corn), and other raw materials. The former must be sold dearer in the foreign country,—the latter in this country,—by all the amount of the tax. What is this in the foreign country, but a premium against our manufactures, in favour of the rival manufactures of other states, or of the importing state itself;—and in this

country, but a tax upon raw materials requisite for carrying on our own manufactures? A ship, for instance, is a manufactured article, and, to encourage our shipping, here is an additional tax upon the raw materials of that manufacture! Our cotton goods, our woollen stuffs, barely maintain a competition with those of other countries, and here is an additional tax on their importation into those countries, to turn the scale against us! Our West-India planters complain of the low price of their productions, and we provoke an additional tax, which tends to shut them altogether out of the foreign market! If the end of this warfare should be, as, pushed to the extreme, it might be, that each country should export its own productions, in its own ships, and no country import the productions of another, in the ships of that other, which would be the greatest loser, the country manufacturing, or the country producing the raw materials? I will not even glance at the effect of all this strife upon the consumers, that is, upon the bulk of the population; because I know that, in certain quarters, I shall be taxed with theory, if I stand up for the general interest of the community, against the pretensions of a particular class, when the interest of that class is supposed to be at stake. Indeed, I have no doubt I shall be told by some practical men, that all this is theory, to which they have a short answer. That answer is, "We do not want any thing from the Baltic. We have plenty of timber, &c. in Canada, all of which would be brought home in British Shipping; and, therefore, the powers of the Baltic must submit to our discriminating duties, without retaliation, or be content to lose our trade." I really know not how to reason with such logicians. I believe the Baltic can do to the full as well without us, as we can do without the Baltic. We import quite as much timber from Canada as can be used, for the purposes for which that timber is fit. For other, and more

important purposes, we want timber of better and more durable qualities. Looking to the Shipping Interests of this country, and to the interests of Canada, I am not one of those who think we have done too much for those interests, in the great preference, in point of duty, which we have given to the Canada timber, and in the consequent sacrifices which we make to encourage the importation of that timber, inferior as it is; but I must say, at the same time, that the great annual increase of the importation from our North American possessions, under the present duty, shews that the proportion, which it bears to the Baltic duty, has not been settled to the disadvantage of the shipping employed in the Canada trade. Were it necessary, however, to make an option between a contest of discriminating duties with Prussia in the timber trade, or a further reduction of the duty on Canada timber, for the greater encouragement of our shipping, I certainly should prefer the latter measure, as the least injurious of the two to all the other interests of this country.

For the reasons which I have now stated, his Majesty's Government have thought it more prudent and more dignified to enter into amicable arrangements with other Powers, founded on the basis of mutual interest, and entire reciprocity of advantages, rather than embark in a contest of commercial hostility and reciprocal exclusion;—a system, at best, of doubtful benefit to the Shipping Interest;—involving the certainty of great injury to all the other important interests of the country; and which would, at last, place Parliament and the Government in the painful alternative, either of turning a deaf ear to the complaints of the many who would suffer from the contest,—or of terminating it, as other contests of a like nature have been terminated, by concession, bringing with it not only immediate humiliation, but other consequences, which do not end with the concession itself.

But it is asserted, that we should not have been compelled to make our choice between these alternatives. Whilst I entreat the House to bear in mind the circumstances which I have already stated, in respect to the general feeling which prevails in the maritime countries of Europe, and in America, I must now call their attention to the steps which had been actually taken by Prussia, (the first power, after the United States, with which we entered into a treaty upon this subject) before the negociation of that treaty was entertained by His Majesty's Government.

I hold, Sir, in my hand a Report, made on the 6th of August 1822, by the British Consul at Dantzic, also Reports of the Vice-Consuls at Konigsberg and Memel, to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I will not trouble the House with reading the whole of these dispatches, but I request their particular attention to the following extracts :

Extract of a Despatch from Mr. Consul Gibson, dated Dantzic, the 6th August 1822.

" My Lord :—I do myself the honour to transmit to " your Lordship a translation of the Order of Cabinet " (which I have only now been able to procure) re- " specting an increase of the Government Port Charges " in the Prussian Ports, on vessels belonging to coun- " tries between which and Prussia no reciprocity has " been fixed by treaty, or which do not otherwise treat " Prussian ships and their cargoes as advantageously as " their own. Prussia has made arrangements with Hol- " land, Denmark, and America, for establishing a reci- " procity in this respect, and the present regulation " has evidently for object to induce other countries, " *particularly Britain*, to enter into a similar arrange- " ment.

" At present Prussian, Dutch, Danish and American

"ships pay, as public port charges here, about 46½ "common groshes, or about 17⅜*d.* sterling, per last of "4,000lb. (about 4,140lb. English), or about 1⅜ tons "British measurement; while British and other vessels "pay about 77⅜ common groshes, or about 29⅜*d.* ster-"ling per last, making 8¾*d.* sterling per ton mea-"surement more. The advance that is to take place "will make, as it will be payable in gold at a losing "valuation, *viz.*

	Pence Sterling per Ton measurement.
"On ships coming in with a full cargo of goods, about	58
"Do. with a quarter of a cargo or less ...	29
"Do. going out with a full cargo.....	29
"Do. with a quarter of a cargo or less ...	14½

"Thus vessels arriving even in ballast, and taking a "cargo back, will in future be burthened with about "37¾*d.* sterling per ton measurement more Govern-"ment port charges than Prussian ships; which however "is not quite so great an advantage to the latter as "British vessels have over Prussian in Britain, by paying "lower port charges, light money, &c. and less duty on "the cargo, if of timber for instance, which gives the "chief employment to Prussian ships.

"The Prussian Government make this new port "charge regulation professedly from the interest "created by the situation of their ship-owners, who "are indeed all going to ruin."

Cabinet Order of the 20th June 1822, for the Encouragement of Home Shipping.

"In consideration of the unfavourable state of the ship-"ping of this country for several years past, and in con-"sequence of the representations made to me, founded "on divers consultations, that the unfavourable state of "things operates the more injuriously on the said trade, "as the principles always observed here, of imposing mo-

"derate burthens on foreign ships frequenting Prussian "ports, and of levying the same duties on goods imported "or exported, whether in foreign or in native ships, are "not adopted in several foreign ports frequented by "Prussian ships; I have resolved, so long as these rela- "tions subsist, so detrimental to the maintenance of this "important branch of domestic trade, to grant the said "trade greater advantages than it has hitherto enjoyed; "I therefore do ordain,

"*First.* That the coasting trade from one Prussian "port to another shall be considered, exclusively, a "branch of domestic trade, and shall be carried on "solely by Prussian vessels, under pain of ship and pro- "perty being confiscated, upon any Foreign Ship-mas- "ter being detected in it. Exceptions can only be al- "lowed in very urgent cases, and only for the public "good, by the Provincial authorities.

"*Secondly.* An increase of the hitherto existing har- "bour dues shall take place, in all Prussian ports, on "Foreign ships with cargoes, in-coming or out-going, "but the same shall not be applicable to the ships of "those nations:—

a. "With which Prussia has treaties, placing her "ships and their cargoes on an equal footing with "the native ships, or with those of the most "favoured nations, in conformity with the stipula- "tions therein made."

"*b.* Which from other causes treat Prussian ships, "with their cargoes, the same as native vessels with "theirs.

"With this restriction shall the increase take place, "according to the following rates:—

"*a.* On in-coming ships...R. 2 per last of 4,000 lbs.

"*b.* On out-going...do.....1.....do.

"*c.* On ships that have only one-fourth of a cargo, "or less, one-half of the above,

"Ships in ballast are not subject to the increased imposts.

"The proceeds of this impost shall not be considered as an additional source of revenue to the state, but shall be applied for the benefit of the Ship-owners, accordingly as you, the Minister of Commerce, shall propose to me.

"*Thirdly*. In order to present, as far as is in the power of the state, a real source of profit to the Ship-owners, the conveyance of such goods as may be for account of the Government, shall be effected, in preference, by native ships, regarding which I refer to my particular order of this day.

"The first and third of the foregoing enactments shall be put in force immediately; but the second point only in three months after publication of this Order, which is to be made through the Collection of Laws, and according to which the needful is to be decreed.

(Signed) "FREDERICK WILHELM."

Extract of a Despatch from Vice-Consul Tuke, dated Konigsberg, 22d August 1822.

"Sir:—I beg leave to draw the attention of your Excellency to several new laws and regulations of the Prussian Government, which are highly detrimental to the British trade, and respecting which numerous complaints have been made to me by the Merchants and Shipmasters interested in the trade between this country and Great Britain.

"By the last tariff, a duty of one guilder per hundred-weight is imposed on all flax, hemp, and tow, shipped in foreign vessels. This is probably intended as a measure of retaliation for the difference of import duty charged in Great Britain between goods arriving

" in British and Foreign vessels. This law has obliged " several British ships this summer to load flax at the " low freight of thirty shillings per ton, instead of fifty " shillings, which they would have got, had not the mer- " chants been obliged to pay twenty florins per ton ex- " port duty, because the goods were shipped in a British " vessel. As hemp and flax are, now that the corn " trade no longer exists, the principal articles of export " from hence, this duty bears exceedingly hard on " British vessels.

" According to a Cabinet Order, dated Berlin, 20th " June 1822, intended for the encouragement of Prus- " sian Shipping, the King has been pleased to direct a " duty of three dollars per last to be charged on all " foreign vessels arriving with cargoes after the expi- " ration of three months. This tax is so important in " its consequences as to demand immediate attention, " for a moderate sized vessel will, by this Order, be " compelled to pay three hundred dollars in addition to " the existing heavy charges, which will entirely prevent " our vessels from enjoying the carrying trade from " home to this country."

Extract of a Despatch from Vice-Consul Fowler, dated Memel, 21st August 1822.

" This difference between British and Prussian " Shipping" (*i. e.* the difference established by the De- cree of 20th of June,) " must drive the carrying trade in " British bottoms from this port, to the great injury of " the British shipping interest; for about three hundred " British vessels, on an average, load here annually " with timber for Great Britain, which, of course, " cannot bear such heavy charges, as cargoes con- " sisting of grain, flax, hemp, tallow, &c. &c. and " which are of so much more considerable value! The " merchants here, who are principally British, have

" protested against this new regulation, and petitioned " the Prussian Government for the repeal thereof."

From what I have now read, the House will at once understand the nature of the measures adopted by the Prussian Government, in the year 1822, and the motives which influenced them in that proceeding. What was the consequence of these measures? Why, that, in the next year, 1823, the Board of Trade, and other departments of the Government, were assailed with representations from all quarters, connected with the shipping and trade of the country, against the heavy charges imposed upon British ships in the ports of Prussia. In such circumstances, what course did his Majesty's Government take? We felt it to be our duty, in the first instance, to communicate with the Prussian minister in this country; and our minister at Berlin was, I believe, also directed to confer with the Prussian Government on the subject. I myself had a conference with the Prussian minister at this court, and I well recollect the substance of his reply to me: " You have," he said, " set us the example, by your port and light charges, " and your discriminating duties on Prussian ships; and " we have not gone beyond the limits of that example. " Hitherto, we have confined the increase of our port " and tonnage charges to ships only; but it is the in- " tention of my Government next year," (and of this he shewed me the written proof) " to imitate you still " more closely, by imposing discriminating duties on " the goods imported in your ships. Our object is a " just protection to our own navigation; and so long " as the measure of our protection does not exceed " that which is afforded in your ports to British ships, " we cannot see with what reason you can complain."

Against such a reply, what remonstrance could we, in fairness, make to the Prussian Government? We

might have addressed ourselves, it may be said by some, to the friendly feelings of that Government;—we might have pleaded long usage in support of our discriminating duties;—we might have urged the advantages which Prussia derived from her trade with England. Appeals like these were not forgotten in the discussion, but they were of little avail against the fact stated by Mr. Consul Gibson—that "the Prussian ship-owners were all going to ruin."

By others, it may be said, "your duty was to retaliate, by increasing your own port charges, and discriminating duties, on Prussian shipping." I have already stated generally my reasons against the policy of this latter course. We were not prepared to begin a system of commercial hostility, which, if followed up on both sides to its legitimate consequences, could only tend to reciprocal prohibition. In this state of things, more prudently, as I contend, we entered upon an amicable negociation with the Prussian Government, upon the principle of our treaty with the United States,—that of abolishing, on both sides, all discriminating duties on the ships and goods of the respective countries in the ports of the other.

Having concluded an arrangement with Prussia upon this basis, we soon found it necessary to do the same with some other of the Northern States. Similar conventions were accordingly entered into with Denmark and Sweden. Reciprocity is the foundation of all those conventions; but it is only fair to add, that they contain other stipulations for giving facility to trade, and from which the commerce of this country, I am confident, will, in the result, derive considerable advantage.

When His Majesty's Government had successively made the concession of these discriminating duties to the United States, to Prussia, to Denmark, and to Swe-

den, I should have been ashamed of the Councils of this country if we had hesitated to enter into a similar agreement with the free Hanseatic towns of Hamburgh, Bremen, and Lubeck. These little States, I admit, had imposed no discriminating duties upon our ships, though they had the power to do so. But would it have been worthy of the character of this great country, consistent with its justice, or honourable to its generosity, to continue to levy, upon the trade and shipping of these ports, duties which were no longer paid by the subjects of more powerful States;—to have made their forbearance the plea for our exaction, or to have waited to do an act of justice until they had deprived us of that plea?

In our treatment of these free towns, this country ought not altogether to forget that, amidst the barbarous ignorance, and habitual violence, of the feudal ages, those little Republics were the refuge of commerce, and the nurseries of civilization. They were the sanctuaries, in which the arts and pursuits, most conducive to the enjoyments and improvement of mankind, were respected, amidst the scenes of bloodshed, rapine, and insecurity, by which they were too often surrounded. With these recollections, I shall, perhaps, be excused if I express my regret, that several of the little trading communities on the Continent have ceased to be free and independent. In point of policy, it has always appeared to me that the incorporation of these communities, with the military monarchies of the Continent, was not the most satisfactory part of the late settlement of Europe. This incorporation was, probably, more the inevitable consequence of the general derangement of the war, than the legitimate result of the principles which prevailed at the restoration of peace. Were I disposed to illustrate the inconvenience of that incorporation, in reference to the present

subject, I might not inopportunely refer to Dantzic. If, instead of passing under the dominion of an absolute monarchy, that town (formerly, I believe, one of the Hanseatic Leagues) had continued free like Hamburgh, and had the Government of Prussia then said, "You shall not trade with us, except on such and such conditions,"—our answer might have been, "the commodities which we want from your country we can procure at Dantzic, where no such conditions are imposed on British ships."

If we look at the present question, as connected with our maritime strength, I contend that there can be little or no danger from the arrangements which I have now described. The states to which those arrangements extend, from their situation, and from many other circumstances, which it is not necessary for me to mention, never can become formidable as maritime powers;—they never can dispute with us the ascendancy on the ocean; nor have they an interest in assisting others to obtain that ascendancy. Their commercial interests, and regard to their own security, must alike incline them to our side.

In time of peace, it is well known, the policy of this country excludes, as much as possible, from our commercial marine the natives of all foreign countries; but, in time of war, when our native seamen are required for the King's service, we are under the necessity of admitting volunteers from other countries to man our merchant ships. The consequence is that, from our multiplied intercourse with those secondary states, their seamen, in time of war, tempted by higher wages and other advantages, assist in manning our merchant ships, and thereby afford us great facilities for carrying on our extensive commerce. On the restoration of peace, these volunteers are, most of them, forced to seek employment again in the merchantmen of their own countries; and

their return thither contributes to give increased activity to the commercial marine of those countries.

If, therefore, by this system of extended reciprocity, a somewhat larger share of the carrying trade between Great Britain and these secondary states, devolve to their shipping, in time of peace, so far as this participation is obtained at the expense of any diminished employment for our own shipping, we may regret the diminution: at the same time, if the circumstances which lead to it be unavoidable, it is some consolation to know, that the corresponding increase, elsewhere, is divided among those countries which cannot be dangerous, and are likely to be most useful to us, in time of war.

The timber trade with Norway has, at all times, been carried on chiefly in the ships of that country. They are built for the purpose, in the cheapest manner, but so rudely constructed, as to be unfit for the conveyance of almost any other article. In respect to the Prussian timber ships, they are also of a construction very inferior to the shipping of this country, built for the purpose of general trade. We are told by most of the Petitioners, and figures are adduced to prove the statements, that they are sent to sea and navigated at less than one-half of the expense of British ships. If it be so, the restoration of the discriminating duty, to the repeal of which these Petitioners attribute all their present difficulties, would be of little avail to protect them. That protection was 2*s*. 9*d*. upon a load of timber, being the difference between 57*s*. 9*d*., the duty in a foreign, and 55*s*., the duty in a British ship, exclusive of some difference on account of lower port charges, and light money paid by the British ship. Against this advantage, therefore, in our ports, was to be set off the alien duty of 3*s*. 1¾*d*. a ton, imposed on British ships in the Prussian ports, whether with a cargo or in ballast. The balance, therefore, on our side would be

next to nothing,—totally inadequate, upon the shewing of the Petitioners, as protection; but just enough to excite irritation, and to afford a pretence for vexatious restrictions on British commerce, and the introduction of British manufactures into the Prussian dominions. It has also been stated by some of the Petitioners, that ship-building in this country is rendered more expensive by taxes on the materials, from which other countries are exempt. I am not aware that, in the petition from the Shipping Interest in the port of London, praying for a continuance of the discriminating duties, the Petitioners urge the direct taxation upon the materials employed in ship-building, as a ground of complaint. It has been alleged, that the Americans build their ships upon cheaper terms than we do. This I do not believe. Timber, I admit, is cheaper in the United States, but almost every other article employed in ship-building is as dear as, and several of them dearer than, in this country. Labour likewise is dearer, and the pay of the crew full as high as, if not higher than, in England.

After all, there is nothing new in the complaints now made of the increased employment of the Shipping of the Northern powers, in their trade with this country. Similar complaints were made after the American war. In the year 1786, the ship-owners represented that our laws gave too great an advantage to foreign ships, and especially to the foreign ships employed in the importation of timber from the Baltic.

In consequence of this representation, the Board of Trade of that day entered upon an inquiry into the subject. Mr. Reeves, in his work on the Law of Shipping and Navigation, states, in reference to this inquiry, that

"In the year 1786, it was observed, that the quantity
"of foreign ships employed in the importation of goods
"from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the East Coun-

"try, was much greater in proportion to the British, than "the foreign tonnage employed in other trades; and that "it was increasing in general, and the British Shipping "employed in some of these trades was, at the same time, "decreasing. A reference was made, in consequence, to "the Board of Customs, to see whether it might not be "proper to augment the duty, called the Alien's Duty, or "petty custom, on such of the goods enumerated and de-"scribed in the eighth and ninth sections of the Act of "Navigation as were then subject to it, and were imported "from the before-mentioned countries; and whether such "increase would materially operate to increase the bur-"thens on, and consequently the prices of, those articles, "if such duty were increased gradually; that is, by mak-"ing it double from the first of January 1787, and treble "from the first of January 1788: and in case the Board "of Customs should be of such opinion, then they were "called upon to consider, whether some advantage might "not be given to British-built ships employed in those "trades, by lowering the duties on those articles when "imported in such ships; or whether both these methods "might not be pursued in such proportions as might best "attain the end proposed, and not materially affect the "revenue."

As it does not appear that recourse was had to these expedients, it is to be inferred that, upon further consideration, it was found it would not be safe to risk the experiment. The Northern Powers had not then complained of our existing alien charges upon their shipping; they had taken no steps to countervail those charges in their ports; but did it follow that they would continue passive, if a question then at rest had been disturbed, by encreasing those charges in the manner suggested? In my opinion, to leave the question at rest, as long as possible, was the wisest policy for this country. It was the policy pursued until the matter was taken up, not by us,

but by the United States of America, and in succession by other Powers. In that state of things, and after the arrangements which we had entered into with those powers, acting upon the necessity of the case, I felt, in the course of the last session, that it would be better to make our laws upon this point square with our practice; to better, as one general rule,—first, to tender to all nations alike, and indiscriminately, equal facilities of commerce and navigation, and equal inducements to visit the ports of this country, with their merchandize, either for our own consumption, or in the way of transit (*entrepôt*) to other parts of the world:—secondly, to abolish all discriminating duties affecting differently the like productions of foreign countries, and, in lieu thereof, to establish one uniform tariff for the whole:—and, thirdly, to reduce that tariff to the lowest degree, consistent, in each particular article, with the two legitimate objects of all duties,—either the collection of the necessary public revenue, or the protection requisite for the maintenance of our own internal industry. These are the principles according to which our new Book of Rates has been formed, and the consolidation of our innumerable, and, in many instances, inconsistent and contradictory Laws of Customs been effected.

A few observations on our commercial policy, with regard to our Colonies abroad, will bring me, I hope, to the conclusion of this important investigation. The former colonial system of this country was simply this, that our possessions abroad should receive all their supplies from hence in British shipping, and they were prohibited from trading directly with any other country. But, so early as the year 1783,—the year in which we recognized the independence of the United States of America,—it occurred to the Government at home, that it might be somewhat hard to require of the West India Colonies to draw all their supplies from the mother

country. What, then, was the line adopted by Orders in Council, allowing those colonies to trade directly with the United States of America in British Shipping, were passed from time to time as occasion required, and the Ministers, as often, came down to Parliament for Bills of Indemnity, for having so far violated the Plantation laws.

—In process of time, however, the Government of the United States, jealous of a trade in which British Shipping alone was employed, said to this country—"If you want the productions of our country for the use of your colonies, and will not allow us to send them in our ships, we will entirely prohibit the exportation to your colonies, in British Shipping, of those articles of which your colonies stand in need." They did so. The British Government had then recourse to another expedient, in order to avert the threatened inconvenience, and at the same time to avoid any positive alteration of our Navigation Laws. A sort of open mart, or fair, was established, at some half-way place between the Coast of America and the West-Indies, to which the ships of the United States came, and where, being met by our traders, the respective parties interchanged commodities, according to their mutual wants.

But the Government of the United States again interfered, and prohibited their ships from this trade. After a suspension of intercourse had continued for some time, Parliament, in the year 1822, passed an Act, by which American Ships were allowed to trade directly, between the United States and our colonies, in the West-Indies and North America.

Now let me ask, was it politic, was it altogether consistent with impartiality, and our friendly relations with the North of Europe, to grant to the shipping of the United States, first, in the trade between them and this country, by the treaty of 1815; and, secondly, in

the trade, by this Act regularly legalized, between those states and our colonies, privileges, which we continued to deny to the shipping of Prussia, of Denmark, of Sweden, of Hamburgh, and of other trading communities of Europe? Upon what principle of fairness, upon what principle of sound policy, were we to continue this preference exclusively to a power, towards which, God knows, I entertain no feeling of hostility,—far from it;—but, when I am speaking of that nation in a British House of Commons, it is not improper to say, that, in matters of navigation and naval power, there exists, towards us, a spirit of rivalry in the United States;—a spirit of which I do not complain, but which should incline every Englishman to doubt the wisdom of any measure, tending to encourage the growth of the commercial marine of America, by giving to it privileges greater than are permitted to the shipping of other states;—states less jealous of our maritime ascendancy in time of war, and, at all times, confining their views upon the Ocean to the industrious employment of their sea-faring people, without looking to the ulterior object of, one day, disputing with us the dominion of that Ocean.

Considering, therefore, the Act of 1822, and the changes which had taken place in the colonial system of other powers, it appeared to me, that the time was arrived when, upon every sound principle, it would be right to extend, to the foreign shipping of Europe, the same privilege of trading with our colonies in the New World, which had been granted to the shipping of America; and also to give a greater facility, and extension, to the intercourse between foreign countries and our colonies generally;—strictly confining, however, to British shipping only all trade between this country and the colonies, and all inter-colonial trade between the different foreign possessions of the British empire.

Whether we look to the interests of our commerce, which are also the interests of our navigation;—whether we look to the separate interests of the colonies, or to the general interests of the parent country;—or whether we consider the changes which have recently taken place, especially in the New World;—all these considerations appear to me to concur in support of the measures to which I have referred, and the enlarged views of policy, upon which they are founded.

Shipping, like other branches of business in this country, is liable to fluctuation. There may be great excitement at one period, and great depression at another. Last year, for instance, the demand far exceeded the means of the British Ship-owners to supply it. The price of freight for foreign adventures was, in consequence, so much raised as to become a very serious injury and interruption to other branches of navigation, more especially to our Coasting trade. Yet, such was the unbridled rage for speculation which then prevailed, that our tonnage could not keep pace with it, and foreign vessels were taken up in every port of Europe, not from a preference, but because British ships could not be procured. This is not the proper occasion to inquire into the origin of the almost universal mania, which appears to have seized upon merchants and manufacturers, not of this country only, but, more or less, upon those of other countries, during the last year. It is now too generally seen and admitted, even by those who were most infected by that mania, that their speculations were carried on without reference to the habitual scale of our consumption, or to the rapid accumulation of goods, or to any of those circumstances which, in their calmer moments, direct the operations of commercial men. When prices had risen, in the first instance, from natural causes perhaps, speculation soon forced a further and more rapid rise, and the only

inference, for a time, among buyers, seems to have been, that it would continue progressive, and almost indefinite.

Connecting this rage for speculation with the employment of Shipping, the House will be surprized to hear in what a degree the quantity of bulky articles from foreign countries, and from our possessions in North America, in the last year, exceeded the importations of former years. In the year 1822, the total importation of timber from foreign countries was 140,715 loads—in 1825, it amounted to not less than 301,548.

		Cwts.
Of flax	in 1822	607,143
Do.	in 1825	1,042,956
Of tallow	in 1822	805,238
Do.	in 1825	1,164,029
		Lbs.
Of wool	in 1822	19,048,879
Do.	in 1825	43,700,553
		Bushels.
Of linseed	in 1822	1,411,137
Do.	in 1825	2,876,571

From British America.

		Loads.
Of timber	in 1822	345,741
Do.	in 1825	467,565
		Cwts.
Ashes	in 1822	135,983
Do.	in 1825	210,781
Masts from all parts of the world,		Number.
under twelve inches in diameter	in 1822	14,484
Do.	in 1825	19,016
Above twelve inches in diameter		
		Loads.
	in 1822	4,577
	in 1825	8,698

The result of all this overtrading of last year, of which I have selected only a few instances, is the depression which now prevails, the interruption of commercial credit, the great diminution of employment for manufacturing labour in this country, and the general derangement of business in the countries with which our principal interchange of commodities is carried on. I deplore this state of things, not the less certainly, because it is not confined to this country; and in alluding to the sufferings of others, I do so, not as a source of consolation to ourselves, but as evidence, that this derangement is to be traced to some cause of more extensive effect than the municipal regulations of this country.

It would be matter of surprise if, amidst this almost universal stagnation of demand, the Shipping Interest, which had fully participated in the extraordinary activity of the preceding period, should not partake of the languor by which it is now succeeded. In looking dispassionately at this or any other of the leading interests of this country, we must not draw our conclusions from extreme cases, either way. We must also recollect that shipping, in common with every other mode of employing capital and industry, when it seeks a foreign market, is liable to be affected by a competition with other countries, and by acts of foreign states, over which we can have no control. As far as exclusion is within our reach,—in the Coasting trade,—in the Fisheries,—in the trade between this country and our foreign possessions,—we grant a strict monopoly to the British Ship-owner. It is our duty to maintain and enforce that monopoly, not for his special advantage, but for the public benefit. It is further our duty to give him every legitimate countenance and protection in the trade of this country with those maritime countries to which any branch of that trade is interfered with, either

by new regulations in those countries, or by the erection of territories, once colonies, into an independent state, however we may regret the circumstances as affecting our ancient navigation system, it may not be in our power to overrule those circumstances. In such a state of things, our policy must be, retaining the important principles of that system as much as possible, to adapt it to the change in our situation, and to the altered relation in which we stand to the parties with which we have to deal.

The first effect of such inevitable changes, either in navigation or trade, is, usually, more or less, to derange the interests, upon which they immediately bear; but the temporary difficulty is generally overcome by the speedy opening of fresh channels of employment, and is soon merged in the increased enterprize which attracts capital and shipping to some other quarter. This was the case after the separation of the British Colonies in North America; and I hope for a similar issue on the present occasion.

We are all agreed that our commercial marine is the foundation of our naval power, and that the maintenance of that power is the paramount duty of those who administer the affairs of this country. In an enquiry like this, therefore, the most important question for the consideration of the House is, not the detail of each separate branch of trade in which our commercial marine was employed in any particular year, but its aggregate amount at this time, compared with the aggregate amount at some antecedent period. Now, Sir, I have already stated what that amount was at the breaking out of the last war in 1793, and what it is at the present time. The comparison, taken by itself, certainly affords no ground for despondency or alarm. But in making this comparison, in reference

to our military marine, we are also to bear in mind, that in 1793, both the military and commercial marine of France and Spain were much more numerous than they are at present. The navy of Spain, once so powerful, has dwindled almost to nothing; her merchant ships have nearly disappeared from the ocean. The navy of France is less numerous and less formidable than it was at the breaking out of the revolution, and her commercial shipping, though reviving since the peace, is probably, at this moment, not more than one-half of its amount in 1792. On the other hand, whether we look to the number of ships of war, to the means of manning those ships, to the general spirit which pervades every branch of the service, or to any other element of naval power, what a contrast between our situation at the close of the last and of the American war! Can we forget the period when the combined fleet of the House of Bourbon was master of the British Channel,—when a West-India convoy was obliged to assemble at Leith, and go north about, in order to escape capture by an enemy's fleet, within sight of our principal sea-ports? Can we forget when Gibraltar, blockaded by the united naval forces of those same powers, was relieved, as it were, by stealth?—when it was considered matter of just praise to the highly distinguished officer who commanded the British Fleet, on that trying occasion, that in performing this service, he was able to elude the vigilance of a superior enemy, and to return to England, without having risked a combat?

These are among the recollections which belong to the American war. How different from those which connect themselves with the war by which it was succeeded! That our sway on every part of the ocean was undisputed by the naval power, not of France and Spain only, but of all Europe, before the close of the last war, is matter of notoriety. In fact, the British navy was

then occupied in the blockade of every naval arsenal of its enemies; and this, for the last years of the war, formed its principal employment in Europe.

When we began that war, in the course of which we achieved so many victories, our commercial marine was three-fifths of its present amount. Our seamen in the king's navy, 16,000, instead of 30,000, their present number. We had then no reserve of veteran seamen, receiving for former services an annual allowance from the State. We have now such a reserve, amounting to many thousands, all of whom are liable upon an emergency, to be called upon by the Admiralty, and of whom a large proportion would, I have no doubt, be found as efficient as before their discharge. Our ships, likewise, are in a more complete state, and better prepared with all the means of speedy equipment, than at any former period of peace.

Never, I will venture to affirm, was there a time when the country might rest with greater confidence and satisfaction on the sufficiency of its naval resources than at the present.

But we are told, and I am ready to admit it, that if the naval resources of France and Spain have declined, a new and formidable power has grown up in the United States of America. I have already stated, that the maritime means of that country had, from peculiar circumstances, been considerably benefited during the late war, which lasted so long, and spread so generally through Europe. But, if the commercial marine of the United States increased, during that period, our own advanced in a greater amount. Since the restoration of a general peace, the Shipping of both countries has rather decreased. The diminution in that of the United States has been stated at 168,000 tons, which I believe to be fully equal to any diminution that has occurred in this country. I am warranted, therefore,

in concluding that, upon a comparison of our commercial marine, with the commercial marine of other powers, we have no reason to apprehend any of the difficulties now which the Petitioners predict, and that our naval means are fully adequate to any possible emergency which may compel us to call them into exertion.

If, Sir, I have trespassed too long upon the time of the House, my apology, I trust, will be found in the vital importance of the subject.

The severe distress, under which the country now labours, is attributed, in some quarters, to the changes which have recently taken place in our Navigation System, and in our Commercial Policy.

If any honourable members entertain that opinion, all that I ask of them is to come forward, and point out distinctly to the House the specific changes to which they ascribe these consequences. It is for them to shew, if they can, by evidence, or by argument, the connexion of cause and effect between those changes and the difficulties in which the country is now, unhappily, involved. Let them give a notice, and appoint a day for that purpose. This would be the manly course to pursue;—it was the course taken by the honourable member for Coventry*, on the question of the Trade in Foreign Silks. For having taken this course I return him my sincere acknowledgments. To follow his example is the only favour I ask of those who heap abuse upon the measures in question, or who excite clamour, out of doors, against the individual, upon whom has been devolved the task, however imperfectly executed, of submitting those measures, on the part of His Majesty's Government, for the approbation and sanction of Parliament.

Mr. Huskisson concluded by moving for the following Returns:

* Mr. Ellice.

Accounts "of the Number of Vessels, with the amount "of their Tonnage, that were built and registered in "his Majesty's dominions, from the year 1814 to the "year 1825 both inclusive:"

"Of the total number of Vessels, with the amount of "their Tonnage, and the number of Men and Boys "employed in navigating the same (including their "repeated voyages), that entered inwards, and "cleared outwards, from and to all parts of the "world, in the several years from 1814 to 1825, both "inclusive; distinguishing the British from the Fo-"reign:"

An Address for "Account of the total Number of Ships, "of all nations, which passed the Sound, from the year "1783 to the year 1792, both inclusive; specifying "the number of ships belonging to each nation:"

"A like Account from the year 1816 to the year 1825, "both inclusive:"

Returns "of the total Number of Ships of War, and "other vessels, which have been sold out of the ser-"vice since the conclusion of the Peace; specifying "the amount of their tonnage, and distinguishing the "number and tonnage of those sold subject to the "condition of being broken up:"

"Of the greatest Number of hired Transports, and Ves-"sels of every description, which were employed in "the public service, under the Navy-Office, or the "Transport-Board, at any one period of the last "three years of the late war, and of the numbers "now employed in the same service; specifying the "total amount of tonnage; also, the Number of "Transports discharged during the years 1815, 1816, "and 1817, and the amount of their tonnage:"

"A like Return from the Victualling-Board:"

"A like Return from the Ordnance:"

"Of the total quantity of Timber of all sorts, Masts, "Flax, Hemp, Tallow, and Linseed, imported from "the different Ports of Europe, in the years 1822 and "1825, respectively; distinguishing the countries "from which imported:"

"Of the quantity of Timber of all sorts, Masts, Ashes "and Corn, imported from the British Possessions in "America, in the years 1822 and 1825, respec- "tively:"

"Of the Number of Ships, specifying their tonnage, "which have entered the Port of London, in the "years 1823, 1824, 1825; distinguishing the British "from the Foreign, and the Coasters from the Foreign "Trade."

For these Papers, see Appendix.

APPENDIX.

No. I.—An Account of the Number of Vessels, with the Amount of their Tonnage, that were built and Registered [illegible] Majesty's Dominions, from the Year 1814 to the Year 1825, both inclusive.

No. II.—An Account of the total Number of Vessels, with the Amount of their Tonnage and the Number of Men and Boys employed in navigating the same (including [illegible] Voyages) that Entered Inwards and Cleared Outwards from and to all Parts of the World, in the several Years from 1814 to 1825, both inclusive; distinguishing the British from the Foreign.

No. III.—An Account of the Number of Ships which passed the Sound, from the Year [illegible] both inclusive.

No. IV.—An Account [illegible] which passed the Sound, from the Year [illegible] both inclusive.

No. V.—An Account of the [illegible] Ship of War and other Vessels, which [illegible] the Service since the conclusion of the Peace; [illegible] of their Tonnage, and distinguishing the [illegible] of those sold, subject to the condition of [illegible].

No. VI.—Return of the [illegible] Hired Transports and Vessels of every [illegible] Public Service under the Transport [illegible] of the last Three Years of the late Year [illegible] employed in the same Service, specifying [illegible] Amount of Tonnage, also, the Number of Transports [illegible] the Years 1815, 1816, and 1817, and the Amount of their Tonnage.

No. VII.—Statement of the total Number of Vessels (not Transports) with their Tonnage, that were employed in His Majesty's Victualling Service, in the Years 1812, 1813, and 1814, and of the Number employed in that Service during the last Year.

No. VIII.—An Account of the [illegible] of all Sorts, Masts, Ashes, and Corn, Imported from the British Possessions in America, in the Years 1822 and 1823 respectively.

No. IX.—An Account of the [illegible] of all Sorts, Masts, Flax, Hemp, [illegible] Imported from the different Ports of Europe, in the Years 1822 and 1823 respectively; distinguishing the Countries from which Imported.

No. X.—An Account of the Number of Ships, [illegible] their Tonnage, which [illegible] the Port of Liverpool, in the Years 1823, 1824 and 1825, distinguishing the British from the Foreign, and the Coasters from the Foreign Trade.

No. I.—An ACCOUNT of the Number of Vessels, with the Amount of their Tonnage, that were built and Registered in his Majesty's Dominions, from the Year 1814 to the Year 1825, both inclusive.

No. II.—An ACCOUNT of the total Number of Vessels, with the Amount of their Tonnage, and the Number of Men and Boys employed in navigating the same (including their repeated Voyages) that Entered Inwards and Cleared Outwards, from and to all Parts of the World, in the several Years from 1814 to 1825, both inclusive; distinguishing the British from the Foreign.

No. III.—An ACCOUNT of the Number of Ships which passed the Sound, from the Year 1783 to the Year 1792, both inclusive.

No. IV.—An ACCOUNT of the Number of Ships which passed the Sound, from the Year 1816 to the Year 1825, both inclusive.

No. V.—An ACCOUNT of the total Number of Ships of War and other Vessels, which have been sold out of the Service since the conclusion of the Peace; specifying the amount of their Tonnage, and distinguishing the Number and Tonnage of those sold, subject to the condition of being broken up.

No. VI.—RETURN of the greatest Number of Hired Transports and Vessels of every description, which were employed in the Public Service under the Transport Board, at any one period of the last Three Years of the late War, and of the Numbers now employed in the same Service, specifying the Total Amount of Tonnage; also, the Number of Transports discharged during the Years 1815, 1816, and 1817, and the Amount of their Tonnage.

No. VII.—STATEMENT of the total Number of Vessels (not Transports) with their Tonnage, that were employed in His Majesty's Victualling Service, in the Years 1812, 1813, and 1814, and of the Number employed in that Service during the last Year.

No. VIII.—An ACCOUNT of the total Quantity of Timber of all Sorts, Masts, Ashes, and Corn, Imported from the British Possessions in America, in the Years 1822 and 1825 respectively.

No. IX.—An ACCOUNT of the Quantity of Timber of all Sorts, Masts, Flax, Hemp, Tallow, and Linseed, Imported from the different Ports of Europe, in the Years 1822 and 1825 respectively; distinguishing the Countries from which Imported.

No. X.—An ACCOUNT of the Number of Ships, specifying their Tonnage, which have Entered the Port of London, in the Years 1823, 1824, and 1825; distinguishing the British from the Foreign, and the Coasters from the Foreign Trade.

No. I.—An ACCOUNT of the Number of Vessels, with the Amount of their
from the Year 1814 to the

	Year 1814.		Year 1815.		Year 1816.		Year 1817.		Year 1818.	
	Vess.	Tonnage.	Vess.	Tonnage.	Vess.	Tonnage.	Vess.	Tonnage.	Vess.	Tonnage.
England	524	69,539	712	84,794	618	67,083	500	63,260	573	70,542
Scotland	136	14,563	165	16,227	192	15,608	156	14,824	131	13,923
Isle of Guernsey	1	32	2	155	4	153	4	587	..	..
Isle of Jersey	1	34	5	539	2	40	1	142	1	121
Isle of Man	25	739	29	842	9	250	3	116	8	195
British Plantations	131	11,069	234	24,061	408	32,282	316	22,321	298	17,302
Total (exclusive of Ireland)	818	95,976	1,147	126,618	1,233	115,416	980	101,250	1,011	102,083

Office of Registrer General of Shipping,
Custom House, London,
19th May 1826.

No. II.—An ACCOUNT of the Total Number of Vessels, with the Amount of their Tonnage, Voyages) that Entered Inwards and Cleared Outwards, from and to all Parts of the World, in

INWARDS.

YEARS.	BRITISH.			FOREIGN.			TOTAL.		
	Vessels.	Tons.	Men.	Vess.	Tons.	Men.	Vessels.	Tons.	Men.
1814	16,065	1,846,670	114,049	5,109	566,516	35,581	21,174	2,413,186	149,630
1815	16,851	1,993,150	120,027	4,919	673,918	39,058	21,770	2,667,068	159,085
1816	16,754	1,966,890	119,779	2,825	317,577	22,253	19,579	2,284,467	142,032
1817	18,707	2,240,675	131,901	3,163	401,792	24,745	21,870	2,642,467	156,646
1818	20,401	2,457,779	143,800	5,898	704,511	40,690	26,299	3,162,290	184,490
1819	19,851	2,413,019	142,160	3,854	478,220	29,138	23,705	2,891,239	171,298
1820	18,586	2,270,400	135,195	3,258	406,401	25,472	21,844	2,676,801	160,667
1821	18,738	2,263,813	134,699	3,091	366,397	24,400	21,829	2,630,210	159,099
1822	20,212	2,390,238	147,603	3,113	419,694	25,607	23,325	2,809,932	173,410
1823	20,303	2,469,053	154,958	3,806	534,674	31,329	24,109	3,003,727	186,287
1824	19,164	2,364,249	142,923	5,280	694,880	38,662	24,444	3,059,129	181,585
1825	21,786	2,786,844	162,614	6,561	892,601	48,943	28,347	3,679,445	211,557

Office of Registrer General of Shipping,
Custom House, London,
19th May 1826.

Tonnage, that were Built and Registered in His Majesty's Dominions, Year 1825, both inclusive.

Year 1819.		Year 1820.		Year 1821.		Year 1822.		Year 1823.		Year 1824.		Year 1825.	
Vess.	Tonnage.	Vess.	Tonnage	Vess.	Tonnage	Vess.	Tonnage	Vess.	Tonnage	Vess.	Tonnage.	Vess.	Tonnage.
586	71,257	461	54,014	399	46,296	442	43,212	468	54,068	625	76,428	722	102,844
154	16,228	121	11,004	122	9,457	87	6,162	92	7,418	139	12,840	209	17,136
7	1,022	6	906	5	961	2	304	4	261	16	1,137	7	350
..	..	3	376	3	334	3	254	2	216	6	586	15	988
13	359	7	169	4	111	2	47	4	160	16	413	6	212
328	21,701	248	16,440	275	15,365	209	15,611	243	22,240	342	50,523	353	50,299
1,088	110,567	846	82,909	808	72,524	745	65,590	813	84,363	1,144	141,926	1,312	171,827

T. E. WILLOUGHBY.

and the Number of Men and Boys employed in navigating the same (including their repeated the several Years from 1814 to 1825, both inclusive; distinguishing the British from the Foreign

OUTWARDS.

YEARS.	BRITISH.			FOREIGN.			TOTAL.		
	Vessels.	Tons.	Men.	Vess.	Tons.	Men.	Vessels.	Tons.	Men.
1814	16,654	1,875,855	116,564	4,452	571,413	33,198	21,106	2,447,268	149,762
1815	17,884	2,088,029	129,091	4,285	671,690	36,901	22,169	2,759,719	165,992
1816	17,383	1,987,794	123,733	2,260	329,942	20,156	19,643	2,317,736	143,889
1817	19,754	2,249,206	136,947	2,674	396,164	22,981	22,428	2,645,370	159,928
1818	19,791	2,401,067	142,476	5,063	671,342	36,764	24,854	3,072,409	179,240
1819	19,424	2,263,650	138,159	3,447	491,405	26,889	22,871	2,755,055	165,048
1820	18,177	2,207,663	134,323	2,739	390,991	22,211	20,916	2,598,654	156,534
1821	18,624	2,223,869	136,384	2,446	351,283	20,415	21,070	2,575,152	156,799
1822	19,436	2,286,713	139,487	2,582	408,417	22,871	22,018	2,695,130	162,358
1823	19,177	2,297,975	140,291	3,179	515,774	26,844	22,356	2,813,749	167,135
1824	20,732	2,492,402	152,584	4,717	690,374	35,823	25,449	3,182,776	188,407
1825	17,079	2,262,458	136,723	5,753	851,354	44,431	22,832	3,113,812	181,154

T. E. WILLOUGHBY.

No. III.—An Account of the Number of Ships which passed The Sound, from the Year 1783 to the Year 1792, both inclusive.

	1783.	1784.	1785.	1786.	1787.	1788.	1789.	1790.	1791.	1792.
	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.
British	1,262	3,163	2,537	2,714	2,959	3,279		3,731	3,720	4,349
Prussian	1,912	1,439	1,358	763	743	904		599	430	737
Swedish	2,143	2,170	2,136	1,778	2,395	1,315		430	1,816	2,134
Danish	1,633	1,733	1,787	1,600	1,337	1,259		1,586	1,394	1,362
Imperial	507	167	66	68	61	79		6	Aus.46	40
Bremen	242	259	176	127	142	172		177	135	188
Dantzig	236	190	161	170	200	169		248	239	209
Russian	145	138	114	89	96	61		6	34	65
Lubeck	100	63	79	81	66	62		89	86	86
Rostock	94	53	101	84	..	171		339	316	338
Hamburgh	49	75	61	45	77	71		104	104	83
Portuguese	40	38	28	19	16	16		28	23	11
Dutch	15	1,366	1,571	1,407	1,436	1,513		2,009	1,736	2,181
Oldenburgh	13	8	..	..	2	2		24	46	35
Venetian	3	5	4	2	..	1		Ital. 6	5	..
Courland	3	16	25	9	10	5		22	34	21
French	..	25	20	18	35	64		123	88	25
Spanish	..	19	15	12	10	15		32	28	40
Americans	..	13	20	22	30	38		44	45	68
Mecklenburghers	..	..	..	..	70	..		..	..	..
Papenburgers	..	..	..	..	61	..		99	125	142
Total	8,397	10,940	10,268	9,008	9,746	9,216		9,742	10,452	12,114

No Account can be found of the Number in this Year

Office for Trade, 17th May 1826. THOMAS LACK.

No. IV.—An Account of the Number of Ships which passed The Sound, from the Year 1816 to the Year 1825, both inclusive.

	1816.	1817.	1818.	1819.	1820.	1821.	1822.	1823.	1824.	1825.
	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.	Num.
British	1,848	4,172	5,052	3,708	3,597	2,819	3,097	3,016	3,540	5,186
Hanoverian	263	529	456	427	458	434	307	316	358	413
Danish	787	843	884	851	792	778	692	637	758	803
Swedish	2,042	2,000	1,745	1,559	1,519	1,439	1,214	1,133	1,303	1,319
Norwegian	794	914	946	971	946	898	728	946	715	951
Prussian	1,014	1,786	1,628	1,351	1,554	1,094	1,096	1,585	2,081	2,391
Russian	399	387	323	356	242	300	259	306	369	335
Netherland	876	1,305	600	834	853	589	391	461	399	630
Mecklenburg	386	512	434	303	547	396	293	496	557	602
Hamburgh	36	87	42	22	15	22	22	23	29	31
Bremen	111	216	77	54	59	66	32	41	33	34
American	168	136	126	89	169	196	216	158	167	230
Portuguese	48	21	8	8	2	2	4	2	6	9
French	16	44	48	52	63	62	58	32	57	72
Spanish	9	8	25	5	..	..	..	..	..	..
Oldenburgh	29	72	41	38	47	46	29	42	30	34
Lubeck	45	83	59	62	64	46	45	59	115	120
Total	8,871	13,145	12,496	10,690	10,926	9,177	8,483	9,203	10,518	13,160

Office for Trade, 17th May 1826. THOMAS LACK.

No. V.—Navy Office, 16th May 1826.—An Account of the total Number of Ships of War and other Vessels, which have been sold out of the Service since the conclusion of the Peace; specifying the amount of their Tonnage, and distinguishing the Number and Tonnage of those sold, subject to the condition of being broken up.

	Number.	Tonnage.
Total number sold on condition of being broken up	112	136,317
Total number sold unconditionally	333	93,530
Total number sold since the conclusion of the peace	445	229,847

No. VI.—Navy Office, 15th May 1826.—Return of the greatest Number of Hired Transports and Vessels of every description, which were employed in the Public Service under the Transport Board, at any one period of the last Three Years of the late War, and of the Numbers now employed in the same Service, specifying the Total Amount of Tonnage; also, the Number of Transports discharged during the Years 1815, 1816, and 1817, and the Amount of their Tonnage.

	Greatest Number employed in the last three Years of the late War.		Now employed.	
	Vessels.	Tonnage.	Vessels.	Tonnage.
Transports in Monthly Pay	991	266,763	32	11,341
Vessels hired for one Voyage only, to carry Cargoes, or parts of Cargoes or Freights	29	9,791	72	24,290
	1,020	276,554	104	35,631
Transports discharged from the Service during the Years 1815, 1816, and 1817			805	217,290

T. B. Martin. H. Legge. Robert G. Middleton.

No. VII.—Victualling Office, 15th May 1826.—STATEMENT of the total Number of Vessels (not Transports) with their Tonnage, that were employed in His Majesty's Victualling Service, in the Years 1812, 1813, and 1814, and of the Number employed in that Service during the last Year.

	Total Number of Vessels.	Tonnage.
In the Year 1812	167	11,756
1813	176	12,966
1814	224	15,017
1825	34	2,737

G. A. CHETWYND STAPYLTON. NICH. BROWN. F. EDGCOMBE.

* * The like return from the Ordnance has not yet been laid before the House.

No. VIII.—AN Account of the total Quantity of Timber of all Sorts, Masts, Ashes, and Corn, imported from the British Possessions in America, in the Years 1822 and 1825 respectively.

ARTICLES.	Quantities imported into the United Kingdom, from the British Possessions in America.	
	1822.	1825.
Timber of all sorts, 8 in. square or upwards, *Loads*	345,741	467,565
Masts, under 12 inches in diameter, ... *Number*	5,662	5,045
—— 12 inches in diameter or upwards ... *Loads*	2,154	3,596
Ashes, Pearl and Pot ... *Cwts.*	135,964	210,784
Corn, Pease ... *Qrs.*	176	1,015
——, Wheat ...	22,476	90,686
——, Wheat flour ... *Cwts.*	2,748	12,311

Inspector General's Office, Custom House, London, 16th May 1826.

WILLIAM IRVING, Inspector General of Imports and Exports.

No. IX.—An Account of the Quantity of Timber of all Sorts, Masts, Flax, Hemp, Tallow, and Linseed, Imported from the different Ports of Europe, in the Years 1822 and 1825 respectively; distinguishing the Countries from which Imported.

IMPORTS INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM.

COUNTRIES from which Imported.	TIMBER, 8 inches square or upwards.		MASTS, under 12 inches in diameter.		MASTS, 12 in. in diameter, & upwards.		FLAX, dressed and undressed.		HEMP, dressed and undressed.		TALLOW.		LINSEED & FLAXSEED.	
	1822.	1825.	1822	1825.	1822.	1825.	1822.	1825.	1822.	1825.	1822.	1825.	1822.	1825.
	Loads.	Loads.	No.	No.	Loads.	Loads.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Bushels.	Bushels.
Russia	6,846	9,710	2,355	2,159	913	753	416,941	664,193	583,760	578,647	788,034	1,149,009	817,183½	1,427,752½
Sweden	1,985	7,461	1,694	2,717	25	33	2	188	.....	.....	.....	2,949	11,371	12,716
Norway	17,228	35,679	4,459	8,353	13	26	.....	.....	.....	241	138	12	1,458½	5,599
Denmark	235	584	5	3	..	..	6	.....	.....	42	956	197	4,588	11,768
Prussia	110,954	233,430	283	696	487	1,523	53,270	100,979	5,317	2,681	19	8	86,796	601,514½
Germany	210	6,847	1	16	..	42	300	4,022	2,264	100	4,369	1,382	5,128	20,934
Belgium	.....	1,674	.....	.....	..	..	134,639	223,179	635	74	2,109	1,492	74,978½	111,751½
France	.....	.....	4	6	..	..	1,870	50,365	2,868	3	2,361	1	.....	8
Italy	2,648	2,753	2	1	..	..	105	15	18,794	8,967	289	7,028	52,974	199,557
Turkey	.....	2	.....	.....	..	..	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	903	94,658	268,736
Other Countries in Europe	12	5	6	5	..	..	3	14	1,836	446	588	10	923	48
Total Import from Europe	140,118	300,145	8,809	13,956	1,438	2,377	607,136	1,042,955	615,474	591,201	798,863	1,163,031	1,150,058½	2,662,350½

Inspector General's Office,
Custom House, London, 16th May 1826.

WILLIAM IRVING,
Inspector General of Accounts.

No. X.—An Account of the Number of Ships, specifying their Tonnage, which have Entered the Port of London, in the Years 1823, 1824, and 1825; distinguishing the British from the Foreign, and the Coasters from the Foreign Trade.

Years.	Vessels employed in the Foreign Trade.				Vessels employed in the Coasting Trade.				Total.	
	British.		Foreign.		Coasters and Colliers.		Irish Traders.			
	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships	Tonnage	Ships.	Tonnage.
1823....	3,031	611,451	865	161,705	17,305	2,114,020	774	81,230	21,975	2,968,406
1824....	3,132	607,106	1,643	264,098	16,330	2,242,590	513	56,392	23,618	3,170,186
1825....	3,989	758,565	1,743	302,122	16,694	2,268,799	833	91,827	25,259	3,421,313

Office of the Registrer General of Shipping,
Custom House, London,
19th May 1826.

T. E. Willoughby.

CORN AND CURRENCY;

IN

AN ADDRESS

TO

THE LAND OWNERS.

BY

SIR JAMES GRAHAM, BART. M.P.

OF NETHERBY.

Second Edition, with Additions.

Quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas, tot bella per orbem,
Tam multæ scelerum facies: non ullus *aratro*
Dignus honos; squalent abductis arva colonis.

Virgil, Georgic I, v. 505.

"It requires some thought and reflection to discover the principles by which we can reconcile reason to experience."

Hume's Essay on Money.

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXXVI.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

ADDRESS

TO

THE LAND OWNERS.

I AM aware that you will not be inclined to attend to the suggestions which I am about to offer: past errors are admitted with reluctance; measures of precaution, especially if they be of a decisive character, are slowly adopted against dangers which are not immediate: and the course of legislation is very rarely the result of previous wisdom; it is rather guided by circumstances, and influenced by the occasion.

You are disposed, both by prejudice and habit, to await the course of events, and to place implicit reliance on the wisdom of the Government, rather than, by the exercise of your controlling power, to avert the evils which you foresee, or to provide the defences which your safety may require.

The other productive classes of the community guard their respective interests in a far different manner; if a measure of Government affect, or slightly threaten, the manufacturing or commercial body, all minor differences are merged in the unanimous opposition which at once is organised:

and energy and concert are found equal to counterbalance the want of political power.

But the Land Owners of these realms, while their property is melting away, while their station in society is in danger, while their incumbrances are increasing and their means diminishing, do not seek to discover the real causes of the evil, and unite to obtain the proper remedy; but they dissipate their strength in a fruitless struggle of parties. One faction clings to the Government of the day, and blindly supports its prodigal expenditure, in the hope of sharing its patronage, and of making that provision out of the public purse for dependants, which the hereditary family estates can no longer bear; while the opposite faction, irritated by disappointment and long exclusion from all participation in Government, is tempted almost to triumph in the ills which their antagonists have created, and seeks a vain consolation amidst national misfortunes, in ascribing to the unbroken sway of their adversaries the common ruin which awaits them all. Angry differences are thus generated and nurtured, destructive to the great interests of the entire body; and for the sake of the precarious benefit to be derived from the support of an Administration, or on account of the headstrong spirit of unavailing opposition, the Land Owners remain divided in this crisis of their fate, and form what has been aptly termed, a rope of sand. But, *united*, what might not they effect? The ancient nobility, inheriting strong

attachment to the soil which their forefathers transmitted as the shield to the family honours, constitutes still an immense majority in the House of Lords, notwithstanding the more recent infusion of less noble blood; in the House of Commons the Landed Proprietors form a phalanx which no minister and no influence could resist, if, true to themselves, they would act in concert, and could be induced to move on one attainable object.

Even the Crown itself, whatever its first Minister may declare, must be disposed, in the balance of interests, to throw somewhat more than "a feather*" into the scale of land. Commerce and manufactures, with their many great advantages, bring their attendant evils. The friends of liberty regard them with no jealous eye, because they are the creatures of free government, and the parents of free inquiry; but I can imagine that the spirit which they produce, coupled with the diffusion of wealth and sub-division of property which mark their progress, may cause no inconsiderable alarm even in the highest quarter. The evils to which I allude cannot be mistaken by any one who has compared the state of the manufacturing and of the agricultural population. Mr. Peel, himself a minister, and a judge the most competent and impartial on this particular question, declared, in his place in

* Lord Liverpool, in his place in the House of Lords, declared, that if preponderance were to be given to one interest of the state more than to another, he would cast a *feather* into the scale in favour of the land.

Parliament*, that "a change had taken place in the manners, habits, and feelings of the manufacturing population; that they were collected in immense cities, and differed, in their relation as regarded landlord and tenant, from the population of any other district; when he saw the great alternation of prosperity and distress which took place among them, the constant vicissitudes to which they were exposed, their imprudence in times of prosperity, only working for two or three days in the week when they had employment, and devoting the rest to dissipation; when he recollected all the influence which a change of fashion, of speculation, or of affairs might produce on the state of these individuals, he could not deny that they were peculiarly open to the mischievous designs of demagogues."

The contrast of an agricultural population scattered in hamlets, earning daily bread by daily labour, either possessed of a freehold, and thereby linked with the landlord, or holding as tenantry, and immediately dependant on him, requires no exposition; peace and health, and sobriety and order, are the happy fruits of rural labour.

"Hic patiens operum, parvoque assueta juventus,
Sacra Deum, sanctique Patres; extrema per illos
Justitia excedens terris vestigia fecit."

It is impossible to believe, in these latter days, when thrones have fallen, and kings have trembled, that this striking difference in the character of a

* Par. Deb. vol. xli. p. 633.

manufacturing and agricultural population should not be weighed and understood even in high places: though it may be lightly esteemed by Lord Liverpool, it cannot fail to give a strong bias to the royal mind in favour of the Land Owner.

Are there then no limits to the power of the Landed Proprietors, if they could be brought to act with unity of purpose, constituting, as they do, a vast majority of both Houses of Parliament, and backed, as they ultimately must be, by all the power of the Crown? I freely answer, that I know no bound but public opinion; and this is a barrier which they cannot pass. Common interests and common dangers may at last unite them, and lead to the exertion of their combined strength; but eventually it will prove insufficient, unless they enlist on their side the sense of the British public, and the interests of the great body of the people.

The seat of public opinion is in the middle ranks of life—in that numerous class, removed alike from the wants of labour and the cravings of ambition, enjoying the advantages of leisure, and possessing intelligence sufficient for the formation of a sound judgment, neither warped by interest nor obscured by passion.

Public opinion, thus constituted, cannot be outraged with impunity; and hence the established check which we possess over the legislature itself. For be it remembered, there *are* measures which King, Lords, and Commons, though united, cannot carry. It behoves, therefore, the Land Owners,

not only to act in concert, but so to frame their measures as to combine with *their own* the interest of the community, and to establish their case on grounds which they can maintain conjointly with the safety and prosperity of the State.

I do not pretend to have made any new discoveries; I wish only to recall to your recollection the statements and the arguments employed by higher authorities, and to bring the whole case at once under your view; for I believe that much error has been occasioned by the direction of your attention to detached parts of the subject,—at one time to the Corn Laws, at another time to the Currency; whereas, to a right understanding of your situation, these two subjects are indissolubly united, and cannot be discussed apart, without detriment and gross injustice to your cause.

Since the year 1815, when the prohibition of the importation of foreign corn, excepting at a fixed price, was first substituted for a protecting duty, your constant and avowed object has been to raise the price of agricultural produce in this country greatly above the level of the continental markets; the obvious effect of this has also been to raise the rate of wages, and to reduce the rate of profits. By the rise of wages the labourer gains nothing, because, when corn is dear, all the articles of first necessity are also dear. Therefore, though his wages be increased, his real reward is not greater; but by the diminution of profits, every class of productive industry

is deeply injured* For on all hands it is allowed, that profits fall as wages rise, and the capital of a nation is but the accumulation of the profits of its inhabitants. Rents, however, are raised by high prices, which force inferior soils into cultivation; since the lower the degree of fertility of the worst land in tillage, which yields no rent, but only reimburses the cultivator—the higher on all land of superior quality, is the extra profit beyond the ordinary return of capital, when expended on the worst. This extra profit is rent; or, in the words of Mr. Mill, "rent increases in proportion "as the effect of the capital successively bestowed "upon land decreases." High prices, therefore, by increasing rents, benefit the landlords, but they confer no advantage on the labourer; they are an injury to the productive, and a tax on the unproductive, classes of the community.

It may be doubted even whether the existing system of prohibition be so entire a benefit to the Land Owner himself, as he would seem to imagine; for, in the variety of seasons, it is impossible that the land cultivated within these islands can, year by year, from one harvest to another, produce a supply of corn exactly commensurate with the demand. At one time, the prohibitory system is unjust to the grower; at another, to the consumer. The grower is injured, when, after an harvest somewhat deficient, the ports are opened by a sudden rise of price, and a large accumulation of

* Vide Elements of Political Economy, by Mr. Mill, Chap. II. § Rent, Wages, Profit.

foreign corn is poured at once into this country; bringing on the farmer the losses incident to over-production, and ultimately on the landlord a correspondent decline of rent. The consumer is injured, in the interval between the rise of price and the importation of foreign grain; he is even exposed to the horrors of famine; for, in proportion as the demand for foreign grain is unusual, the supply in case of emergency must be precarious. Thus the alternate evils of redundancy and scarcity, unsteady prices and uncertain rents, are the inevitable consequences of the present system of our Corn Laws.

Farming is therefore made both a "gambling "and a hazardous speculation." No caution can guard against ruinous losses, for no prudence can foresee the chances on which they depend; whether the price of wheat will rise to 78*s*. per quarter, when the profit to the farmer would be enormous, or touch the maximum of 80, when, by the opening of the ports and of the granaries of corn in bond, wheat would instantly fall at least 50 per cent. to his entire ruin, is a matter almost of accident, frequently influenced by fraud; thus the full operation of the present Corn Laws exposes agricultural capital to losses rather incident to the hazard table than to fair mercantile speculation. Rents also must constantly vary, together with the lowest quality of the soil which the hope of profit may force into cultivation. The Land Owner can never know beforehand what is his real income; he cannot regulate with certainty

his expenditure; with wheat at 70, his farmers pay their rent; with wheat at 80, on the opening of the ports, the price falls at once to 40; and then the rent, calculated perhaps even on the moderate scale of 56, cannot be paid. Thus revenue from the soil is literally made the sport of wind and of weather.

The landlord's best customer is the manufacturer; but his prosperity depends entirely on high profits, which it is the avowed tendency of high prices to reduce. If corn be dearer in England than elsewhere, wages must be higher*; and if wages be higher, profits must be lower; thus, our foreign competitors obtain the greatest possible advantage: and if the system become permanent, manufacturing employment, except for the home market, must decrease in this country; and surely it is not the interest of any class so to enhance the price of labour and provisions as to secure to the foreigner successful competition, and to choke with obstructions the principal channels of native industry.

The feeling of the public must be hostile to the

* It has been objected to this position, that in America corn is cheap, and wages are high; but this is the exception, which *proves* the general rule; for in infant States, where the population is thinly scattered, and where immense tracts of land of the first quality are still uncultivated, the supply of labour is unequal to the demand, and wages are consequently high, *notwithstanding* the cheapness of provisions; but even there the high rate of wages, though produced by a different cause, lowers the rate of profits, and decidedly checks the growth of manufactures.

present Corn Law—the receivers of rent are a very small body—backed by public opinion, they are almost omnipotent—in violation of public opinion, they cannot long retain an exclusive advantage. The contest is fearful; for on what ground will it be decided? On the very topic which inflames to madness: that hunger, which breaks through walls, will be arrayed against them, reason will be heard no longer, the barriers of society will be broken down; and estates, distinctions, honours, swept away in one resistless torrent. Let those who seek high prices at all risks remember the words of Tacitus:

"*Vulgus ad magnitudinem beneficiorum aderat: "stultissimus quisque pecuniis mercabatur: apud "sapientes cassa habebantur, quæ neque dari "neque accipi, salvâ republicâ, poterant.*"

I admit to the fullest extent, the claim of the Land Owner to a liberal protecting duty,—to such a duty as may amply countervail the peculiar taxes to which the produce of the soil is subjected in this country. Mr. Ricardo, an unexceptionable authority on this point, declares*, "That on every "principle of justice, and consistently with the best "interests of the country, the demand of the "home grower to this extent should be acceded "to;" for he says, "that a tax affecting him ex-"clusively, is in fact a bounty to that amount on "the importation of the same commodity from

* Protection to Agriculture, p. 16.

"abroad." Mr. Ricardo also admits*, "that *all* "the tithes fall exclusively on the agricultural "interest;" and † elsewhere he allows, "that "tithes, a portion of the poor rates, and one or "two other taxes, are peculiar to the Growers of "Corn, and tend to raise the price of raw pro-"duce to an extent equal to these peculiar bur-"dens." The aggregate amount of these burthens is very large: it is estimated by Mr. Whitmore‡ at eighteen millions annually. The land-tax alone has been collected at the rate of four shillings in the pound, and is valued as amounting to 10 per cent. on the rent throughout the kingdom§. The poor rate, county rate, and highway rate, have a decided tendency to increase: the former in proportion to the distress of the labouring classes—the two latter in proportion to the civilised improvement and growing population of the country. New bridges are built, new communications are opened, and the roads are every where placed under management, which consults rather the public convenience than frugal economy. The weight also of the administration of justice is fixed on the land, and this burthen becomes heavier, as crime increases with a more dense population. By an act passed in this last session of Parliament, individuals have been relieved almost entirely from the expenses of crimi-

* Hansard's Par. Deb. vol. vii. p. 456.

† Protection to Agriculture, p. 15.

‡ Par. Deb. vol. viii. p. 263.

§ Lord Lauderdale's Protest on Foreign Corn Importation Bill, p. 7.

nal prosecutions; and the county rates have been made responsible for the prosecutor's bill of costs, not only at the sessions, but also at the assizes, even in cases of misdemeanor.

It is the boast and the pride of the Land Owners, that the most important establishments of our polity have been founded on their estates, as on a rock from which they cannot be moved. The ministers of our established church derive their revenues from land—the poor, the aged, and the infirm, in aid of their necessities, have a legal claim on land—the injured and the oppressed, who cannot obtain justice for themselves, or punish the wrong doer at their own expense, cast the burthen also on land: thus religion, charity, and justice have the guarantee of landed property in this country, and are its safeguards in return. All those who value genuine piety, the pure offspring of our Established Church, and who, unprejudiced by the abuse of the poor laws, still venerate their humane origin, and appreciate their utility, when cautiously administered; all these, (and they form the best part of our community,) will strenuously resist any change of security, any transfer of the charge from land to funds. The clergy and the land owners, the poor and the proprietors, are co-parceners in the soil; they must stand or fall together on their existing tenure. They may fall indeed; but religion, and mercy, and justice, will fall with them; and they who are buried in these ruins, are happier than they who survive them.

Equity demands, however, in favour of the landed proprietor, an equivalent for the exclusive charges fixed by law on his estate; that equivalent must be a protecting duty on foreign corn imported; the *amount* of the duty is a fit subject for discussion: but here we are arrested by the past variations in the value of our currency, and the price which we have first to settle is the price of money; for it is impossible to establish a fixed protecting duty with fairness, when the standard of value is itself unfair.

This appears to me the very core of the whole subject, the point on which you have committed the most fatal errors. You have fought for high prices, and concurred in measures which render them impossible. You have retained your monopoly, but consented to a change in the value of money, which must destroy its efficacy. The ground which you still endeavour to defend, is no longer tenable; and the points which you have surrendered, ensure your defeat. If I might venture to allude to the conduct of the Landed Interest in this last session of Parliament, I should say, that it affords conclusive evidence of the blindest adherence to the single object of high prices, coupled with an entire misapprehension of the means by which this object might be attained, and of the general principles on which prices must depend; the price of commodities, and of corn amongst the rest, is compounded of *two* ingredients—of the supply in the market compared with the demand, and

also of the value of money; itself the measure of value, liable, however, to great variation, in proportion to its quantity.

The value of money is in the inverse ratio of its quantity; the supply of commodities remaining the same,

Increase the quantity of money, prices rise.

Decrease the quantity of money, prices fall.

On the other hand, the quantity of money remaining the same,

Increase the quantity of commodities, prices fall.

Decrease the quantity of commodities, prices rise.

Thus a decrease of the quantity of money produces the same effect on the price of a commodity as an increase of the quantity of the commodity itself; if corn be that commodity, an addition to the value of money, such as the diminution of its quantity occasions, insures as effectually a fall in the price of Corn, as the opening of the ports and free importation: in which of the two cases prices would fall lowest, is a simple question of proportion between the increased supply of corn and the decreased quantity of money. These truths are elementary, and admitted as axioms; yet the conduct of the Landed Interest proceeds on a virtual denial of their validity. The high price of corn being their declared object, they direct their whole strength to the preservation of their monopoly of the supply, and at the same time contribute their support to measures designed to dimi-

nish the quantity of money, and to increase its value. Their whole attention is absorbed by *one half* of the object of price—they look only to the supply, they disregard the measure of value. By fixing the standard at £.3 17*s*. 10½*d*. for an ounce of gold, the price of a quarter of wheat was fixed, on an average of years, at from 40*s*. to 50*s*. In a *single* year of dearth, with the ports still closed against the admission of foreign grain, it is possible that the price may rise to the *maximum* of 80*s*., amidst the suffering and execrations of a starving populace. But in a *series* of years, since the Legislature has restored the ancient standard of value, wheat also must fall to its ancient price,—to the price which it bore in a currency of the same intrinsic worth.

The Report of the Corn Committee of 1813 establishes the fact, that the highest price of wheat, which, in the century prior to 1792, had taken place for any average period of five years, was 49*s*. 9*d*. a quarter; and this range of price is found at the commencement, as well as at the close, of the century; that is to say, the price of wheat, with no great average variation, remained uniformly under 50*s*. a quarter, from the first commencement of the present standard of value until our departure from it. Yet, despising the soundest theory, and neglecting concurrent experience, the Land Owners still strain at an impossibility created by themselves, and vainly hope, under their Corn Laws, to raise the price of wheat, which

the return to the ancient standard, with their full approbation, must, of necessity, reduce. As a body, up to this moment they remain undeceived; for it is well known, that in this last session they bargained with the King's Ministers to support the further contraction of the currency, on condition that the Government did not destroy their monopoly by a repeal of the Corn Laws. It was not possible to make a more imprudent bargain: they conceded a measure which, without collateral safeguards, must prove fatal to their interest; and they received, as the consideration, on the precarious tenure of one year, the shadow of a benefit, in fact rendered illusory by their own concession.

Even the administration which they trusted has not kept faith with them; for, within ten days after the rejection of Mr. Whitmore's motion for an inquiry into the Corn Laws, which the Government resisted with a large majority, Lord Liverpool introduces a measure at the very close of the session, when all inquiry is impossible, and when popular feeling is most excited, the tendency of which is to subvert the existing Corn Law, and to establish a duty of twelve shillings in its place. It is the insertion of the sharp side of the wedge, to be driven home in the next session. The administration thus trusted, and so true to the landed interest, would not grant inquiry in 1825, or in April 1826; but in May they rush to legislation, when all inquiry is impossible; in a season of plenty, tranquillity, and peace, they consent to

no alteration: under the ordinary pressure of progressive adversity, still they consent to no alteration; but when outrage has commenced, and when mobs are assembled in open insurrection, under the watchword of the Corn Laws, *then* is the precise moment, without inquiry, to change the law,—to hold up by deeds, if not by words, the Land Owners of this country to a starving population, as the authors of their suffering; and to yield, as a tribute to intimidation, the boon which they refused to reason.

Moreover, so far from urging the Government to bring *separately* under the view of the Legislature the questions of Currency and Corn, it was the decided interest of the Land Owners to have insisted on a careful revision of both these subjects conjointly. They are in themselves intimately blended; it is absurd to talk of price without reference to money; and it is impossible to alter the quantity of money without affecting prices. Disjointed discussion on these two vital points is the precise cause of the dangerous conclusions now sanctioned by Parliament, which threaten with ruin and degradation the whole class of existing proprietors.

Since the real difficulties of the state, and the present danger of the landed interest, will be found to lurk under this question of the currency, I shall be excused if I endeavour minutely to examine it, and to trace it in detail.

It must be owned, that the subject is in its nature intricate and foreign to the taste of country gentlemen; but the experience of the last twenty years has tended to throw the strongest light on it, and to reconcile theory with facts. I am certain that before long, the whole question of our currency must be forced on the attention of the Legislature by the Land Owners themselves, if they mean to preserve their estates;—an accurate knowledge of the whole subject is therefore more important, in proportion as it is difficult and complex.

Throughout this investigation, two established propositions must be borne in mind, which, on account of their importance, at the risk of repetition, I will restate: The first, in the words of the Bullion Committee of 1810:—"That, by means of "the increase of quantity, the value of a given por- "tion of circulating medium in exchange for other "commodities is lower; in other words, the money "prices of all commodities are *raised*, and that of "Bullion with the rest." The second is the converse of this proposition, and is equally true; namely, that by a diminution of the quantity of the circulating medium, the money prices of all commodities are lowered, and that of Bullion with the rest.

The term of the foreign exchanges being favourable or unfavourable to a country, has been thus defined:—the exchange is in favour of a country having money transactions with another, when a

given quantity of gold or silver in the former is convertible for such an amount in the currency of the latter country, as will there be convertible into a *greater* quantity of gold or silver of the same fineness: if it be convertible into a *less* quantity, the exchange is said to be against the former country; if into an *equal* quantity, the exchange is said to be at par.

The necessary consequence of an unfavourable exchange would seem to be a drain, on the country where it exists, of all the precious metals circulating within it; but Mr. Henry Thornton (vol. xix. p. 900, Par. Deb.) has truly stated, that gold and commodities are exported in the relative proportion in which their exportation answers; and since every diminution of the quantity of gold in one country must produce an augmentation of it in others, the relative value of gold to goods must soon find one general level; and thus gold is received as the common standard of value.

These premises being admitted, it will be necessary, in the first place, to trace the variations of expansion and contraction which have taken place in our currency since the year 1793, and then to demonstrate the effect of these variations in relation, not only to the price of Bullion, but of Corn, the regulator of wages and profits; the general effect also on the price of all articles of first necessity must not be overlooked, for this, in the end, will be found to be the surest test of the

depreciation of currency; and a rise in the price of *all* commodities, of which bullion is one, is the real criterion of excess; the *amount* of that rise above the level of a series of former years, is the measure of the *quantum* of that excess.

Doctor Adam Smith has remarked, that after the discovery of the abundant mines in America, corn rose to three or four times its former price; but this change is to be ascribed, not to any rise in the real value of corn, but to a fall in the real value of silver. It may be added, with equal truth, that a great fall in the price of corn, especially if accompanied by a general fall of prices, is a proof of a rise in the real value of the currency, and thus we arrive at a general proposition; the quantum of the rise of price on commodities generally is the measure of the depreciation of the currency; the quantum of the fall of prices generally is the measure of its increased value.

Let us look to the facts, and apply them according to this rule.

I am indebted to Mr. Mushet's most able and laborious work on the Currency, for the detail of almost all the circumstances which serve to illustrate this important part of the subject, and I can only attempt to reduce to a smaller focus the extensive view which he has taken of it.

From the period of the restoration of our currency to its standard value, in 1697, until the commencement of the French war in 1793,

the price of Bullion never rose materially above the mint price of £.3. 17*s.* 10½*d.* per oz. which was the established standard; and, consequently, no depreciation of our currency took place.

There are only two periods worthy of remark in this long lapse of years. In 1720, the year of the South Sea bubble, Gold rose to £.4. 1*s.* 6*d.* per oz.; and in 1782, at the close of the American war, to £.4. 2*s.* At both these periods, the circulation was excessive: in 1782, the Bank of England had in circulation, Notes to the amount of £.9,160,470. In 1784, the Bank reduced its issues to £.6,100,610; and Gold fell at once to the mint price (vide Mushet, pages 8 and 9). Thus early, but in vain for posterity, both the cause and the remedy of the depreciation of the standard were clearly made manifest.

The concurrent effect, also, on the price of wheat is well worthy of observation; first, the remarkable steadiness of its price throughout the century while the standard was not depreciated; and, secondly, the immediate rise of its price whenever the circulating medium was in excess.

During the war of the Revolution, from 1688 to 1697, the average price of wheat was £.2. 10*s.* 8*d.* a quarter*. From 1697 to 1764†, the average

* Par. Deb. vol. ix. New Series, p. 887.

† Report of Corn Committee of 1813, Cobbett's Par. Deb. 25th vol. Appendix, p. 59.

was £.1. 13*s.* 3*d.* a quarter; and from 1764 to 1794, the average was £.2. 4*s.* 7*d.* a quarter.

	Price per Quarter.		
	£.	*s.*	*d.*
The average of 5 years, ending 1779, was	2	0	9
Ditto . . . . 1784, . .	2	5	9½
Ditto . . . . 1789, . .	2	3	3

It is to be noticed, in the first place, that the average throughout the century never rose higher than the price at its commencement in 1697. The cause of the high price at that precise juncture, was the debasement of the coin by clipping, equivalent in effect to the increase of its quantity; but after the value of the currency had been restored*, neither in peace nor in war, if the average be taken in these alternate periods, did wheat ever rise again to the price of 1696, until 1793. It rose, indeed, in the five years ending 1784, compared with the five years immediately following and preceding; but this was the period when the standard was considerably depreciated; when gold rose to £.4. 2*s.* per ounce; and when the issues of the Bank of England were, as I have stated, in comparative excess.

From those facts two inferences may be drawn:—that, in a *long* series of years, the price of broad corn is the surest test of the variations of the standard of value; and that a depreciation of the

* Vide Par. Deb. vol. ix. p. 887.

currency operates on the price of corn more directly and powerfully than war, than peace, or any other circumstance, excepting always, *for short periods*, the demand and the supply.

Here also I must avail myself of an observation made by Mr. Canning, in his unrivalled speech on Mr. Vansittart's resolutions, in 1811, where he proves the over issue of paper to produce, from the same cause, the same effect as the clipping of the coin. I must use the words of Mr. Canning; for it is impossible to do justice to any argument which he has employed, in any language not his own.

"In 1698, a period of war, the deterioration of "our silver, then our standard coin—in 1773, a time "of peace, the deterioration of our gold coin, were "indicated alike by the long continued unfavoura- "bleness of the foreign exchanges. In both cases, "the reformation of the coin remedied the evil. "The coin had then ceased to contain, and the "paper has now ceased to represent, the quantity "of precious metal implied by its denomination. "Foreign countries estimated the coin then as they "do the paper now—not by what it was called, but "by what it would exchange for, in these commo- "dities, gold and silver, which are, by the consent "and practice of mankind, the common measure of "all marketable value."

Thus prices and the foreign exchanges indicate, simultaneously and equally, the real value of the currency; whether it be coin debased by clipping,

or paper by over issue; or coin enhanced by rectification, or paper by the contraction of its amount.

It is a curious fact, that the operations of the Bank of England commenced with the first creation of a paper currency, and with the existence of national debt. The crisis in 1697, when the debased coin was restored to its full value, is the date to which these three transactions may be referred: they were the expedients of the day, by which the exigencies of the state were met, and the deficiency of the restored currency supplied.

Mr. Pitt, when he introduced his bold measure of the Bank restriction, which rendered the paper of the Bank of England no longer convertible into cash on demand, and imposed no limit on its issues beyond the will of the Government, or the caprice of the Directors, declared, with prophetic warning, *"that if the country be *once* surcharged with "paper, it would have as ruinous effects as would "be produced by lessening the quantity of the "paper circulation; a sudden diminution of the "paper currency would prove the most violent "shock which the trade and credit of this country "could receive."

Notwithstanding this sound prediction from the author of the measure, his successors, who profess to tread in his steps, and to venerate his

* Hansard's Par. Deb. vol. xxxiii. p. 71.

name, have despised the warning, have rejected the admonition, and applied the power precisely in the two modes which Mr. Pitt thought most dangerous. "The country *has been* surcharged "with paper;"—there *has been* a "sudden dimi-"nution of the currency," not once, but repeatedly; and, exactly as Mr. Pitt foretold, each violent change, in either direction, has shaken to their foundations "the trade and credit of the country."

It would be tedious to attempt a detail of the course pursued by the Bank of England in each year, with the effect produced by the increase or decrease of their issues on the rate of the exchanges, and the price of commodities; but "since Corn," as Mr. Horner contended*, "is the "permanent standard of all value; the precious "metals being the practical measure—bread corn "the real measure,"—an opinion in which Mr. Locke also joins, who says†, "that Wheat is the "fittest measure to judge of the altered value of "things in any long tract of time," I shall content myself by presenting the reader with a table, marking the amount of the Bank of England paper in circulation in the months of either January or February in each year, from 1792 to 1809, together with the average price of wheat per quarter in England and Wales during the same period.

* Vide vol. ix. pp. 909, 910, Par. Deb. New Series.

† Letter to Lord Somers.

TABLE I.

DATE.	Amount of Bank of England Notes in circulation.	Average Price of Wheat per Quarter.
	£.	s.
1792 February	11,149,809	43
1793 Ditto	11,428,381	49
1794 Ditto	10,697,924	51
1795 Ditto	13,539,163	71
1796 Ditto	10,909,694	76
1797 Ditto	8,601,964	52
(Report of Committee in the House of Commons, on the Bank resuming cash payments, in 1819.)		
1798 Jan. to June, inclusive	12,954,685	50
1799 Ditto	13,374,874	69
1800* Ditto	15,009,457	105
1801* Ditto	16,134,249	120
1802 Ditto	16,284,052	67
1803 Ditto	15,967,094	56
1804 Ditto	17,623,680	59
1805 Ditto	17,271,429	87
1806 Ditto	16,941,887	77
1807 Ditto	16,724,368	73
1808 Ditto	16,053,787	79
1809 Ditto	18,214,026	94

* These two years were years of dearth.

N.B. Mr. Mushet has traced, with his accustomed accuracy, the effect of the issues of the Bank on the price of stocks throughout this same period; and the result of a rise and fall exactly corresponds, like the price of wheat, with the increase and decrease of the issues.

From the comparison of the issues of the Bank with the correspondent average of the price of wheat throughout this long series, it will appear that an increase of issue has, with wonderful pre-

cision, created a rise of price,—not always indeed in the same year, but more generally in the one immediately succeeding; and a decrease of the issue has produced, in like manner, a correlative decline. The effect of increase is illustrated by the years 1803, 1804, and 1805, in which the harvests were good, and the produce abundant; (*vide* Joplin on Currency, Appendix, No. 14); and in which the rise of price cannot therefore be attributed to a deficiency of supply. 1800 and 1801 were years of dearth, and prices rose far above the level of the augmentation of the currency, clearly indicating an inadequate supply of the commodity. The effect of the decrease of the issues is illustrated by the fall of price in the years 1797 and 1798; and the fact, that a steady price is the sure consequence of a currency uniformly full, and neither increased nor diminished, is established in the most striking manner, by a comparison of the price of wheat, and of the issues of the Bank, in the years 1806, 1807, and 1808.

The issues of the Bank of England form, however, only a part of the paper currency of the nation; and here we open a most important view.

In the words of the Bullion Report of 1810*, "the paper of the country banks is a superstructure raised on the foundation of the paper of the Bank of England; the foundation being enlarged, the superstructure admits of a proportionate extension; and the excess of the

* Par. Deb. vol. xvii. p. 251, Appendix.

"Bank of England paper will produce its effect "on prices, not merely in the ratio of its own "increase, but in a much higher proportion." And, again, the converse is also true; for a contraction of the issues of the Bank of England produces always a proportionate diminution of country bank paper, and a reduction of prices far greater than commensurate with the decrease of the issues of the Bank of England. Though the effect produced on prices by the conjoint operation, both of the Bank of England and of the country banks, were not in proportion to the increase or decrease of the issues of either, taken separately; yet it might be imagined that, as between each other, some *fixed* proportion must exist in the amount of their outstanding paper. The fact, however, is otherwise; for, in periods of excess*, the issues of the country bankers have greatly exceeded the rate of increase by the Bank of England; and, in periods of contraction, the diminution has been more violent and unlimited.

This is a result most dangerous to the safety of the Bank of England, and fatal to the attainment of steady prices: it is dangerous to the Bank, because, though unable to control the issues of the country bankers, it is responsible with its gold, when the exchanges are turned in consequence of the general excess of the currency, and

* Vide Mushet, pp. 27, 28.

when bullion becomes an article in demand for exportation. Steady prices are impossible, because, without a check on excess, it is the interest of the issuers of paper to push their profits to the utmost verge, and to increase the circulation until the exchanges actually turn, when the Bank of England, in self-defence, contracts its currency, and ultimately forces a contraction of the country paper also; and then commences a rapid and ruinous fall of price, succeeded in its turn by a recurring rise: the country is thus exposed to perpetual oscillaion between hollow prosperity and real calamity, whereby uncertainty is introduced into the value of all property, and a spirit of gambling and of fraudulent speculation into the ordinary transactions of domestic life.

I shall now offer a second Table to the reader, showing the issues of the Bank of England*, the issues of the country banks†, the average price of wheat‡, and the average price of gold bullion; together with the difference§ per cent. between the market and mint price, from the year 1809 to the year 1819. I have also added the‖ amount of the loans contracted for in each year, made up to the 5th of January next following.

* Report of the Lords' Committee in 1819.

† Sedgwick's Tables, No. 2 of Mushet's Appendix.

‡ Joplin's Table, No. 10, Appendix.

§ Edinburgh Review, vol. xxxvi. p. 410.

‖ Annual Parliamentary Accounts.

TABLE II.

DATE.	Amount of Bank of England issue, from July to December, inclusive.	Amount of Country Bank Paper in circulation, on 10th October of each year, inclusive.	Average price of Wheat.	Average market price of Gold per Ounce.	Difference per cent. between market and mint price.	Amount of Loan contracted for.
Year.	£.	£.	*s.*	£. *s.* *d.*	*per cent.*	£.
1809	19,641,640	23,702,493	94	4 10 9	$16\frac{1}{2}$	14,675,669
1810	24,188,605	23,893,868	105	4 5 0	$9\frac{1}{10}$	12,242,357
1811	23,094,046	21,453,000	93	4 17 1	$24\frac{1}{2}$	16,636,376
1812	23,351,496	19,944,000	125	5 8 0	$38\frac{1}{2}$	29,268,587
1813	24,107,445	22,597,000	107	5 10 0	41	35,050,575
1814	23,291,832	22,709,000	74	5 1 8	$30\frac{1}{2}$	36,078,048
1815	26,618,213	19,011,000	64	4 12 9	$18\frac{3}{5}$	39,421,959
1816	26,681,398	15,096,000	75	3 18 6	Under 1	8,939,803
1817	29,210,035	15,898,000	94	4 0 0	$2\frac{1}{2}$	
1818	26,487,859	20,507,000	83	4 1 5	5	66,681,626 (Unfunded debt outstanding)
1819	24,697,407	17,366,875	72	4 3 0 (in Feb.)	$6\frac{1}{3}$	18,756,687

It appears, from this Table, that the issues of the Bank of England influence ultimately the gross amount of country bank paper, though they fail to regulate the rate of variation: the increase of the one produces an increase of the other—the decrease of the one produces a decrease of the other; but the ratio is different, and the fluctuation not simultaneous. It proves, also, that corn is, in its price, more immediately susceptible of a change of the value of currency than bullion itself; for, in the Table, the only contradiction to this assertion would seem to be, the discrepancy in 1812 between the rise in the price of wheat and the diminution of the gross amount of the currency in that year; but the harvest in 1811 was generally defective, and yielded three eighths less than an average *(Vide Joplin, No. 14, Appendix)*. In like manner, the low price of 1814 is to be accounted for by the harvest of 1813, which was more than an average. But the years in this period, which are really worthy of notice, are 1815 and 1816.

The Battle of Waterloo having terminated the war, and peace having been re-established on solid grounds, in 1815 the Government was anxious to redeem the pledge which limited the Bank restriction of 1797 to the duration of the war, and they contemplated a return to cash payments. Both the Bank of England, and the country banks, prepared for the change by a large reduction of

their issues. Mr. Lloyd, in his evidence before the Committee in 1819, stated that the circulation of the country was at its highest in 1813 and 1814, but that it was reduced nearly one-half in 1816 and 1817; gold fell almost to the mint price, wheat to 64 shillings a quarter; and such a scene both of agricultural and commercial distress ensued, as this unhappy country had at that time never witnessed. The total number of bankruptcies in 1815 were 1,285; in 1816, 2,029, an increase in one year of 55 per cent.; and I repeat the conviction of competent judges, when I assert, that the losses sustained by individuals in this year counterbalanced all the profits of all the bankers during the war.

But the Government which at that time ruled our destinies, had compassion on the sufferings of the community. They sickened at the sight of the ruin which their measure, though not executed, and only contemplated, had created. They saw 30 per cent. added in 18 months to the value of money, and a proportionate increase to the burthen of taxation, and of every other fixed incumbrance. They knew that it was intolerable; they were merciful; they were disinterested: regardless of the increased value of their own salaries, they felt for the debtors, the tax payers, the great body of the people; and they admitted *their* just claim to forbearance in preference to the undue profits of the creditors, the tax eaters, and the annuitants.

They thought wholesome food and constant employment better for the people than *wholesome* currency and hunger, amidst landlords without rents, and manufacturers without profits. They turned aside, therefore, from the "stern path of duty *;" they relented for a time, and renewed the Bank Restriction Act; with an increase of the circulating medium, prosperity returned.

The bankruptcies in 1818 were 1056: in 1817, there had been 1575,—a decrease within the year nearly equal to 33 per cent.

I cannot fail also to remark the immense sum added to the debt during the period of the great depreciation of the currency; according to the measure of the ancient standard, which was then suspended, we generally borrowed about 15*s.* in the pound; and with our return to that standard, we are now required to pay the entire 20*s.* The letter of the bond, and the pound of flesh, are claimed by the creditor.

The Government, however, again vacillated in their policy; theory gained ground as experience was forgotten; the capitalist and the economist ruled the day; and an administration, more connected with annuities than with land, possessed of few acres, and haunted by general principles, introduced, in 1819, a measure which will render that

* This is the expression always used by Lord Liverpool when he *means* to be firm, and before *circumstances* induce him to waver.

year memorable in the history of our misfortunes, if it be not the real date of our decline.

The Government, in the course of the year preceding, had resolved to return to cash payments; and with this view it had reduced its debt to the Bank of England, and thereby diminished the paper circulation, both of the Bank itself, and also of the country banks. The approximation of the price of gold to the mint price, in 1819, was effected by these means. Moreover, no less an amount than seven millions of gold coin had, at the instigation of the Government with a view to this measure, been poured into the market at the standard price by the Bank of England; and this operation was in progress at the time when the committee on Mr. Peel's Bill assembled. An artificial reduction in the price of gold was the consequence: and the Committee, and even the Legislature, were thus betrayed into the error of estimating the extent of the depreciation of the paper by the current price of gold. Hence they adopted the fallacy, that the paper money was then only four or five per cent. below the value of the ancient standard which they sought to restore. They formed their judgment of the value of money at that time, not from the price of commodities generally, but from the price of a single commodity—of gold, with which the Government had been tampering, for the express purpose of forcing down its value. Mr. Attwood puts the argument

with full force, when he asks, whether the corn market, at the period of the highest prices, and of the greatest depreciation of paper, would not have experienced a sudden decline, if corn to the amount of seven millions sterling had been forced to a sale for a particular purpose, at 40*s.* a quarter? and whether it would have been a just conclusion, under such circumstances, that no depreciation of paper, no general rise of prices existed, because at that moment it was not indicated by the price of corn?

Mr. Ricardo, a great authority, contended, indeed, that the price of gold was the true index of depreciation, but he varied in the application of his own test; for in 1819 he contended, that 3 per cent. was the full amount of the depreciation; whereas, before his lamented death in 1823, he admitted his original error, and confessed that the bill of 1819* had raised the value of the currency at least 10 per cent. But, with that candour, which characterises superior genius, he has elsewhere admitted the imperfect nature of the data on which this last calculation is founded; for he says, in a speech delivered in Parliament†, "that he had "computed the whole rise in the value of money, "since Mr. Peel's Act in 1819, at 10 per cent. "*He confessed that he had very little ground for* "*forming any correct opinion on the subject.*

* Par. Deb. vol. ix. p. 852.

† Par. Deb. vol. ccxi. p. 947.

"*By comparing money with its standard value, we "had certain means of judging of its depreciation; "but he knew of none by which we were able to "ascertain with certainty alterations in real or "absolute value.*" And again, in his* Protection to Agriculture, he makes a similar admission, and remarks, "That it is a question exceedingly "difficult to determine, what the effect has been "on the value of gold, and consequently on the "value of money, produced by the purchases of "bullion made by the Bank. When two com-"modities vary, it is impossible to be certain "whether one has risen, or the other fallen; there "are no means of approximating even to the know-"ledge of the fact, but by a careful comparison "of the value of the two commodities with the "value of *many other commodities.*"

A departure from this last rule, thus established on Mr. Ricardo's own authority, was the real cause of the errors committed in 1819; the value of money was compared with the value of gold alone, *without* any reference to the value of other commodities: and most unfortunately it so happens, that gold, the single commodity selected, must, of necessity, prove the most faulty measure by which the general rise or fall of prices can be estimated. The reason has been stated by Mr. Attwood, and has as yet received no answer†.

* Page 30.

† Par. Deb. vol. vii. p. 386.

" In a *rise* of prices, occasioned by the exclusive " use of paper money, the great demand for bul- " lion, that of circulation, ceases at once. The " bullion market then receives *supplies* from the " quarter whence previously its principal *demand* " originated. In the same manner, when a metal " standard is again resorted to, a new demand for " gold at once takes place precisely at that mo- " ment when, in consequence of a contraction in " the general demand of money, a reduced demand " exists for all other commodities; gold bullion, " consequently, is of all commodities the last and " the least to rise, in a general rise of prices occa- " sioned by the depreciation of paper money; " and the last and the least to fall, in a general " fall of prices occasioned by the restoration of " that depreciation."

Mr. Malthus, also, in his Treatise on Population, expressly states, that the alterations in the value of money are to be computed from the average price of agricultural produce, the wages of labour, and the general price of commodities.

Nay, Mr. Peel himself, the author of the measure, stated in terms*, " that depreciation was to " be estimated, not alone by the difference between " paper and gold, but in combination with the " extent of co-existent credit currency."

Experience also proves, that the price of bullion

* Par. Deb. vol. vii. p. 886.

is a false criterion of the quantum of depreciation; for the late Lord Liverpool estimates the depreciation of the coin by clipping in King William's reign at eighty per cent.; and the advance in the price of gold was only forty per cent. —of silver, twenty-five. Thus each metal gave an erroneous, but a different indication of the extent of the debasement. Moreover, previous to 1819, the long exclusion of gold from the circulation of this country must have increased its quantity, and therefore diminished its value, in every other part of Europe. There was a period of four years, during the war, in which no sale or purchase of gold bullion could be ascertained in England.

Even Mr. Horner, in his Bullion Report of 1810, says, "It may be doubted whether, since the "new system of Bank of England payments has "been fully established, gold has in truth con- "tinued to be our measure of value; and whe- "ther we have any other standard prices than "that circulating medium issued primarily by "the Bank of England, and in a secondary "manner by the Country Banks, the variations of "which, in relative value, may be as indefinite as "the possible excess of that circulating medium."

Mr. Baring*, also, as well as Mr. Ellice†, who unite, in a singular degree, the soundest theory with the greatest practical experience, protest

* Par. Deb. vol. ix. p. 899. † Ibid. vol. vii. p. 534.

against the doctrine of the price of gold alone being the measure of the extent of depreciation; for they contend, that, in 1819, the precious metals themselves were depreciated, in consequence of an unlimited issue of paper, which had forced all the gold and silver from England into the market of the world.

Thus argument and authority combine to prove the fallacy, under shelter of which, in 1819, the Bill for the resumption of cash payments passed. Mr. Ricardo at first estimated the value added to money by the restoration of the ancient standard, at three per cent.; after experience, in 1822, he admitted it to have been 10; while Mr. Attwood and Mr. Ellice rate it at near 50, and Mr. Baring from 25 to 30; and when we come to trace the effect of the measure, in its full operation, I think it will be evident on which side the truth preponderates.

But not only were the supporters of the measure avowedly wrong in the calculations on which it was founded, but Mr. Peel, its author, neither propounded nor foresaw its necessary and extensive consequences. An alteration in the value of money involves, of necessity, a co-extensive change of contracts. If that change had, in reality, been but three per cent., in the pursuit of a great legislative object, a partial inconvenience to this limited extent might have been overlooked;

but the known integrity of Mr. Peel makes it clear, that he contemplated no *heavy* addition to existing incumbrances: for, neither in his Report nor in his speeches, did he once allude to a tax, a debt, a salary, or a pension; and he rested the merits of his case on the examples of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when no public debt was in existence, and of King William's, when four millions were the full amount of the whole debt, and the interest on it £.200,000 a year. Moreover, at that period there existed no standard which had been previously debased by an act of the Legislature itself. Mr. Peel relied implicitly on the wrong *datum* of 3 per cent. being the full extent of the depreciation as indicated by the price of bullion; a price which he and his colleagues had, by their own measures, artificially reduced; and having first deceived himself, he succeeded in misleading the Legislature; for, by use of examples which were not applicable, and by the oversight of the most important considerations, he carried the restoration of the ancient standard of value, without any adjustment of contracts made in a debased currency, or provision for the increased incumbrance of all debts, taxes, and annuities.

It was strange, also, when reliance was placed on historical examples, under circumstances totally dissimilar, that the course pursued by other coun-

* Par. Deb. vol. ix. p. 956.

tries, in a state of affairs identically the same, should have been entirely overlooked; for in France, after the abolition of the assignats and mandats, and the re-establishment of a metallic currency, the Government ascertained the value of the louis-d'or, as compared with assignats, at different periods; and in this simple manner, on reference to the given market price of the louis-d'or, at any given time, contracts were reduced to their real value; and more recently, when the French Government altered the value of its money to the extent of five per cent. only, it provided by law for a corresponding adjustment of all debts. The United States of America, also, when, in the last extremity of their struggle for independence, they resorted to a depreciation of their currency, guarded against the fatal effects of their own measure by enacting that no bargain or contract for land should be valid, if on a credit of longer term than three days. In the example of France we find retributive justice; in the example of America prospective wisdom: but in vain shall we seek to discover the slightest vestige of either virtue in the British enactments of 1797 and 1819. *Here* by law we depreciated the currency, and by a solemn resolution of the House of Commons, denied the fact of depreciation. *Here* by law we raised the value of money, and instead of avowing our purpose, and preparing for its effects, we mystified the intention, and were blind to the result.

But the Act of 1819, which professed only to restore the ancient standard of England, did, in fact, considerably more; until 1793, silver was a legal tender by weight, and to any amount, at 5*s.* 2*d.* per ounce; gold was not paramount, but concurrent with it. Mr. Peel's Bill made gold *alone* our standard: the market price of silver is somewhat less than the mint price, and its conjunction with gold as a standard, such as it was until 1793, would at once have effected a depreciation approaching to five per cent.; would have enabled us to remit taxes to the extent of two millions and a half; and would have raised money prices exactly in the same proportion. Thus, not satisfied with a return to the ancient standard, regardless of all the difficulties, we even ventured to *raise* its value.

It will be necessary here, once again, to recur to facts, and to show the immediate effect of this measure on the issues of the Bank of England, and of the country banks,—on the average price of wheat, and on the advances of the Bank of England to the Government; for it is through the medium of the latter transaction, that the Government can at once controul the entire amount of paper in circulation; by repayment of advances to the Bank, the Government diminishes its issues; by an enlargement of the loan, it necessarily increases them; for we have already proved, that the circulation of the country banks is influ-

enced by that of the Bank of England; the paper of both must circulate together at par; and consequently, since quantity governs value, the reduction of the amount of one entails the necessity of the reduction of the other; by watching, therefore, the balances between the Government and the Bank of England, we can ascertain the movement of that mysterious hand which, placed on a resistless lever, can raise or depress, at will, the value of all property, and, the price of all commodities.

TABLE III.

YEARS.	Bank of England Notes in Circulation.	Country Bank Notes in Circulation.	Average Price of Wheat per Quarter.	Advances of Bank of England to Government on the 26th of August of each year.	The per centage of Decrease on Country Bank Paper as compared with the year preceding.
1819.	£.	£.	*s.*	£.	*per cent.*
From Jan. to June	25,593,233	17,366,875	72	25,546,230	$15\frac{3}{10}$ as compared with 1818.
July to Dec.	24,697,407				
1820.					
From Jan. to June	23,928,315	11,767,391	65	20,826,447	$32\frac{3}{10}$
July to Dec.	23,692,301				
1821.					
From Jan. to June	23,522,693	8,414,281	54	16,641,620	$28\frac{5}{10}$
July to Dec.	19,632,665				
1822.					
From Jan. to June	17,953,075	8,067,260	43	14,188,200	$4\frac{1}{10}$
July to Dec.	17,772,717				

I humbly conceive, that this table is of real importance; it contains the "*prima mali labes*," and marks a wonderful coincidence between the contraction of the currency and the fall in the price of wheat, exactly corresponding also with similar measures, and a similar result, in the years 1815 and 1816. The circulation of the country banks was reduced 76 per cent. between the years 1819 and 1822; and the reduction of the entire currency cannot be estimated at less than 50 per cent. on the whole; and yet, shall it be gravely contended, that Mr. Ricardo was right, and that prices only fell in the proportion of the fall of the market price of gold to the mint price? The fact is, that the price, not only of corn, but of commodities generally, began to fall in 1819, and gradually settled down in proportion to the contraction of the currency, until the year 1822. The distress, the failures, the general embarrassment, which ensued, proceeding from the same cause which produced the crisis in 1816, were again removed by precisely the same remedy, which then proved successful. Contraction of the currency had created the evil in both cases; in both cases also its expansion terminated it. But the Government in the latter period adhered more pertinaciously to their grand experiment. During three years they remained firm to their purpose; the bitter fruit of the system was tasted by all classes—I am in error, when I say by all; for

amidst the ruin of the farmer and the manufacturer, the distress of landlords, and the insurrections of a populace without bread and without employment, one class flourished and was triumphant; the annuitant and the tax eater rejoiced in the increased value of money; in the sacrifice of productive industry to unproductive wealth, in the victory of the drones over the bees.

It is strange that the Landed Interest did not then clearly perceive the total inadequacy of the protection of the Corn Laws against a ruinous fall of price occasioned by a great decrease of the circulating medium. For protection could do no more than give absolute monopoly, and the command of the supply, which they then enjoyed. The crops of 1818, 1819, 1820, and 1821, had been no more than an average*; yet prices gradually fell from 83*s.* to 43*s.* a quarter; and, the further they receded from the last opening of the ports in 1818, the lower they became; the universal complaint of the petitioners from the agricultural districts, in 1822, was their inability to pay either rents or taxes, while wheat continued as it then was, under 50*s.* a quarter. Yet, for 150 years prior to 1793, 50*s.* was rather more than the average price; and while gold is at £.3. 17*s.* 10½*d.* an ounce, that wheat on an average, in a series of years, must be under 50*s.* is as certain as the revolution of the planets round the sun.

* Vide Joplin's Appendix, No. 14.

The wavering policy of the Government, in this second crisis of 1822, would also be remarkable, had we not been accustomed to witness their compliances, where vacillation is most dangerous, equalled only by their obstinacy, where concession is most important. On the 15th of February of that year, Mr. Huskisson, in his place, addresses the House and says*, "If we are unable to rescue "many of the victims from the ruin which depre- "ciation, guaranteed by law, has brought on "them; at least, let it be a warning never to be "forgotten against any future tampering with the "standard value of the currency." On April 29th, in two short months after this solemn declaration, †Lord Londonderry, then the colleague of Mr. Huskisson, introduces his measures intended for the relief of the agricultural interest; and he dwells on the extension of the currency of the Bank of England, and the consequent increase of the country bank paper, as a principal source of mitigation of the distress; admitting distinctly the contraction of the currency caused by Mr. Peel's Bill to have occasioned the fall in the price of agricultural produce; and in this very speech he gives notice of the introduction of the Small Note Act.

The avowed purpose of this Act was a fresh tampering with the currency—a modification of the Bill of 1819; and its object, in which for a

* Vol. vi. p. 252. † Vol. vii. p. 157.

time it succeeded, was an increase of the circulation. By the Act of 1819, all bankers were bound to pay cash on demand for their notes, and to discontinue the issue of paper for any sum under five pounds, after the year 1824. The inevitable consequence of this impending necessity was a great contraction of the paper, both of the Bank of England, and of the country banks, as evinced in the last table; the removal of this necessity was calculated to act in an opposite direction, and to produce the opposite effect of a very large increase. To render this result more certain, the Government applied even a new stimulus to circulation; they abolished one of the principal safeguards which existed even under the Restriction Act from 1797 to 1811, against the dangerous abuse of an unlimited paper currency.

On the stoppage of cash payments by the Bank of England in 1797, the 15th of George III. was repealed, which prohibited the issue of bank notes under £.5; and private bankers were permitted to circulate one and two pound notes: but every holder of such notes was empowered to demand payment in specie; and in case of refusal for a space of seven days, any magistrate was authorised to levy the amount by distress on the goods of the banker so refusing. This summary process was a decided check on over issues. But in 1822, when the Small Note Act was introduced, no clause of this nature was inserted; and a large majority,

influenced by ministers, has since decided against the re-establishment of this most effective and salutary security, by which a redundant circulation might have been averted.

The result at once answered the intention and expectation of the Government; and in spite of Mr. Huskisson's warning, balanced indeed by his own wavering, this second crisis of 1822 was averted by a second tampering with the currency, and by its forced enlargement, just as the first crisis in 1816 had been postponed by the adoption of the same means.

But the mischief and horror of this system is, that it only mitigates the symptoms, without eradicating the disease; it is an opiate, the effect of which must in its nature be transitory, and the convulsion always returns with increased violence, and more fatal prognostics. Mark well its effects from 1822 up to the present moment; without the re-enactment of the Bank Restriction, the Bank of England remains liable to pay its notes in gold of standard weight and fineness; in self defence, therefore, it must suddenly contract its issues, from the moment that the exchanges begin to turn. It is also worthy of remark, that since the passing of Mr. Peel's Act, the market price of gold has ceased to be any measure whatever of depreciation; for, as Mr. Tooke observes*, it

* Tooke on the State of Currency, p. 68.

cannot now exceed the mint price, "since, as long "as the Bank is solvent, so long will coin be de- "manded from the Bank, in preference to buying "bullion at the smallest advance on the mint "price of £.3. 17*s*. 10½*d*." The legal disqualification of the coin for export, which has now ceased, alone admitted of bullion being sold *above* the mint price previous to 1797.

The only indications of excessive issues now remaining are, the rate of the exchanges, and the rise of prices in general; of bread corn in particular, denominated, even by Mr. Horner himself, the paramount standard of all value.

TABLE IV.

YEAR.	Average amount of Bank of England Notes in Circulation. (Mushet, p. 141.)	Advances of Bank to Government. (Parliamentary Papers.)	Amount of Country Bank Notes in Circulation. (Sedgwick's Table.) (Mushet's Appendix, No. 2.)	Per Centage of increase of Country Bank Notes compared with the year preceding.	Average price of Wheat.	Prices of the following Articles (in bond), in their proper order. Cotton Bowed Georgia. Iron British, Tobacco Virg. Ord. and Sugar. (Tooke's Appendix, F.)
	£.	£.	£.	*per cent.*	*s.*	£. *s.* *d.*
1822	17,772,717	14,188,200	8,067,260	—	43	0 0 0
1823	18,603,302	15,319,316	8,798,277	9	51	0 0 10½ 7 0 0 0 0 3¼ 1 18 2¾
1824	20,110,314	15,884,468	10,604,172	20 1/5	62	0 0 9¾ 11 0 0 0 0 5¾ 1 14 5¾
1825	19,092,095 (6th April)	19,679,288 (26th Feb.) 18,261,100 (26th Aug.)	14,147,211	33 4/10	68	0 1 6¾ 13 0 0 0 0 6¾ 2 5 2

And here, once again, I have had recourse to a Table (No. 4), which shows the average amount of Bank of England notes in circulation, the state of the advances from the Bank to the Government, the amount of country bank notes in circulation, the per centage of their annual increase, the average price of wheat, and the highest prices of cotton, iron, sugar, and tobacco, in the years 1823, 1824, and 1825.

From July 1822, to April 1825, the increase to the general amount of the currency was rapid and immense; and the expansion of the country bank paper far exceeded the proportion of the addition to the issues of the Bank of England; although this latter corporation forced out its notes by every possible means, however contrary to all sound principles of banking, by *loans on mortgage, by loans on stock*, by the purchase of the dead weight annuity, by advances to Government to pay off dissentients on conversion of the five per cents. into four, and by a loan of two millions, at two and a half per cent., to the East India Company*. Prices continued to rise; notwithstanding an increase of supply; the crop of 1824 was superior, yet wheat became dearer; importations from the colonies were im-

* It has been conjectured by Mr. Tooke, that the whole amount of the circulating medium, on the average of four months, ending April 1825, was little, if at all, short of 50 per cent. above what it had been in the corresponding period of 1823. (Tooke on Currency, p. 53.)

mense, yet sugar and tobacco rose in price; fresh capital was every month added to the iron trade, yet the price of iron was doubled. The extension of circulation had produced its usual effect of an extension of credit abroad, and of an increased foreign demand for our manufactures. But, in August 1824, the foreign exchanges became unfavourable, and continued so throughout the year 1825. The demand of gold at the Bank of England for exportation was considerable; and on the 5th of January, 1825, gold, to the amount of £.4,417,092, had been exported. In April the Directors became alarmed; and, according to a statement delivered in the House of Lords by the Earl of Liverpool, on the 17th of February last, they made the enormous reduction of £.3,500,000 in their issues, between the months of February and November, 1825. Money became scarce; the exchanges improved, but credit failed. The country bankers, deprived of accommodation in London, greatly contracted their issues; or, from inability to meet their engagements, became insolvent. Confidence was every where destroyed; one-eighth of the English country banks were ruined, and six of the London banks stopped payment. Terror prevailed; credit was at an end; a contraction of the entire currency, ten times more sudden than its extension, was the consequence. Its increase had been progressive for two years; its annihilation was the work of a few weeks.

And here we will pause for a moment, to con-

template the conduct of the Bank of England in this great emergency.

In 1797, when the Government of this country first began to identify itself with the Bank of England, Mr Fox remarked*, with rare sagacity and early foresight, "that the Bank Directors "ought to do nothing inconsistent with the in- "terests of the proprietors for whom they act. "When *they* consider the public interest, instead "of that of the proprietors, they depart from their "proper sphere. Let the functions of the Bank "and of the Parliament be kept distinct, and they "are both exercised to the public advantage. Let "the Directors pursue their private interests, and "attend to their own concerns; let Parliament "and ministers devote their attention to public "measures: this is an arrangement which suits "better with their respective objects, and con- "duces best to their common ends; instead of "that union of duties in which every thing is "confounded, and that distraction of pursuits in "which every thing is destroyed."

This advice has been long forgotten, but the warning has been verified. The power of increasing and of diminishing at will the currency of the country, which never has been entrusted to the responsible ministers of the crown, is now vested in persons *not* responsible to the Legislature or to the public, on whom the only possible check must be their interest or their discretion.

* Vol. xxxiii. p. 44, Par. Deb.

The *discretion* of the Directors may be estimated by the wisdom of their measures in 1824, and in the beginning of 1825; when, notwithstanding the fall of the exchanges, and the existence of a rash spirit of speculation, clearly generated by a redundant paper currency, they despised every warning, and increased their paper issues to the extent of eight per cent., as compared with 1823. The drain of treasure from their coffers compelled them at last to reduce the amount of their out-standing paper suddenly, and to the extent, as stated by Lord Liverpool, of little less than one-fifth on their gross issue. This contraction caused a run on the country banks, and a general alarm; when, instead of increased liberality for a short period in their discounts, which might have arrested the panic, and allowed the general contraction to be gradual, in the early part of November last, they actually refused to discount, in the ordinary course of trade, the acceptances of some of the bankers of the best established credit in the city. Fuel was thus added to the flame: the Bank became alarmed for its own safety: the rush for gold had commenced. Having created the evil, they sought to repair it; and the same men who, in November, refused discount on approved security, in December added, with prodigality, eight millions to their issues.

So much for their discretion. How stands their interest? It is directly at variance with that of

the public. Attention to the profits of the body of proprietors is their first duty; and it must be their obvious policy, as it has been their constant practice, to push the circulation of their notes to the utmost verge of safety, and suddenly to contract it on the first warning of danger. The contraction of the issues in November was dictated by a regard to their own interests; the sudden enlargement in December was forced by the controlling power of the Government: the conflict of such opposite principles produced unsteady management; and the mischievous consequences, which flow from such conduct, shake even the stability of the State itself. In the words of Lord Grenville, "the utility of the Bank depends on "its being kept distinct from the Government."

The effects of this last convulsion have assumed the appearance of a sickness unto death: and the symptoms of 1816, and of 1820, 1821, and 1822, have all returned in an aggravated shape. Prices have fallen generally, and to a degree even then unknown. With a contraction of our currency, a demand for gold from abroad has arisen; money has become scarce, and prices, therefore, lower among our foreign customers: the demand for exports from hence is, therefore, proportionably diminished: there is a glut in our markets: commerce is stagnated, manufactures suspended; masters are without money, and men without employment; and ruin and insurrection stalk throughout the land.

The price of wheat, which in the early part of the present year fell 20 per cent., has lately risen, and is now about 60*s*. a quarter; but the very fact of its rising in spite of diminished consumption, while all other articles of first necessity are cheaper, is an indisputable proof, that the cause must be an inadequate supply. The stocks of grain are low, the ports are closed, and the produce of the last harvest, which was rather below an average, came into use early, and is considerably exhausted; but let not the landed interest vainly imagine that, secure under the shelter of the Corn Laws, they can escape the pelting of this pitiless storm. The same effects must ever flow from the same causes: they have the experience of 1816, and of 1822: the approach to the ancient standard in the one case, brought ruin to their door; in the other, its complete restoration would have ground them to powder, had not the Government relaxed its principle, introduced the Small Note Act, augmented the circulation, and thus raised the price of wheat from 43*s*. in 1822, to 68*s*. in 1825.

But the prospective repeal of the Small Note Act in this last session,—of that measure whereby Lord Londonderry staved off the evil day, and avowedly rescued the Land Owners from their fate, coupled with the contraction of the currency now existing, and the precautions taken against its future enlargement, inevitably tends to give full effect to Mr. Peel's Act of 1819, to render per-

manent the prices of 1822, and to bring back the precise difficulties, and the same glaring injustice, which were then experienced.

The film, which now blinds the Land Owners to the glaring light, in which their dangers are visible, is, I apprehend, the existing price of farm produce: but I have proved the fallacy of this criterion, when it is remembered, that the two ingredients which constitute price, are the value of money, and the supply compared with the demand. Money has greatly increased in value within the last six months; the price of commodities generally has fallen; yet the price of wheat continues almost unchanged: the demand notoriously is declining; the supply must therefore be deficient: and with confidence I repeat the assertion, that the law, which fixes the standard of value at £.3. 17*s.* 10½*d.* and compels payment of paper in specie on demand, establishes also 50*s.* a quarter as the average maximum for wheat in a series of years. I appeal to an entire century for the proof,—from 1697 to 1793; for it is shown, by the Eton College Tables*, that, for 150 years prior to 1793, the average price of wheat, calculated in periods of 10 years, was about 51*s.* a quarter; and the improved knowledge of the science of agriculture, stimulated by the prices of the late war, and founded on the experiments which they produced, leading to the economy of labour and the use of superior implements, may

* Par. Debt vol. viii. p. 1602.

be considered as an increase of supply almost equal to the increase of demand occasioned by the growth of our population since 1793.

With the same standard we must have the same price; there is no escape from the dilemma: and if the Land Owners would preserve their estates, either the standard must be adjusted to their incumbrances, or their incumbrances to the standard. I have already spoken with perfect freedom of the existing Corn Laws; their effect on the price of corn is now absolutely nugatory, excepting in years of inadequate supply; *then* their burthen becomes intolerable to the consumer, and fatal to the prosperity of the manufacturer. Public opinion is strongly opposed to them; *in their present shape*, and with the present standard, they may create famine; they certainly estrange the hearts of the people from the ancient possessors of the soil; they are liable to be swept away by force in a year of scarcity; and importation *without* protection may be established on their ruins; but on an average of years, while Mr. Peel's Act remains unaltered, the monopoly, which they give, must be abortive in raising prices.

Let me implore, therefore, the Land Owners to abandon the futile attempt of artificially maintaining high prices under the ancient standard; let them make a timely compromise with the public, and take an ample, but fair, protecting duty, with open ports, on the admission of foreign

corn; a duty, equivalent to the burthens imposed on the producers of corn in this country, to which the consumers of corn are not equally liable: and on the same principles, a drawback on exportation may be obtained. This concession will win back the kindly feelings of the people; and let not the Land Owners lose this great advantage,—let them rivet the gratitude of the community to their cause; let them exert all their power, and insist on the revision of Mr. Peel's Act of 1819,—an act no less fatal to the Land Owner than to the payer of taxes,—an act now about to come into full operation,—an act which, from its first introduction, goaded the people to insurrection; and the returning influence of which has not failed to produce the same alarming consequences. Here the Land Owners may, with safety, make their stand: the position is impregnable; the payers of taxes, the productive classes, are ready to defend it: substantial justice is on our side; and who are they that are against us?—the Annuitants, the Fundholders, and the Economists; a body which the Land Owners, if true to themselves, and in concert with the people, cannot fail to defeat.

It would be wise then carefully to review the real effects of the measure of 1819, as bearing on the Land Owner, the debtor, and the tax payer, the classes which comprise the great bulk of the community: and let us not be deluded by the supposition, that the crisis is passed; for it is only in fact now commencing; it was warded off in

1822; it is made inevitable by the repeal of the Small Note Act, and by the destruction of the country bank paper; the impossibility will soon appear of fulfilling contracts in an increased measure of value, which were made in a depreciated currency; of refunding in gold advances made in paper; and of paying an undiminished amount of taxes out of the diminished profits of reduced capital.

An ounce of gold, from 1697 to 1793, would have exchanged for a quarter and a half of wheat. The average price of wheat, from 1797 to 1816, was, for the whole period, 81*s.* 10*d.*; and an ounce of gold would only have exchanged for one quarter of wheat. From the depreciation of money, grain thus became of increased value; and the rental of land rose in an equal proportion. But incumbrances were also increased; taxes were quadrupled, and the situation of the Land Owner was not really improved. But what is his state now? His rental is reduced, his fixed payments remain the same; and after an allowance for the management of landed property, at all times necessarily expensive, the *nett* income of a Land Owner, even without debt, is always far below his nominal rental. But the same nominal amount of money has a signification now different from that which it bore during the long periods of depreciation; during those times, in which heavy taxes were imposed, the civil list augmented, increased allowances granted to all the public servants, and the whole expendi-

ture of the Government settled with a view to this depreciation. So likewise in private life, every mortgage was entered into, every jointure fixed, every portion for younger children established, with reference to this same depreciation. More than all, an enormous sum was borrowed by the nation, equal in amount to one half of our mountain of debt, for every pound of which we received about 15*s.*, and are now required to pay 20*s.* The restoration of the standard has falsified all accounts. It gives the property of the debtor to the creditor—of the Land Owner, to those who have charges on his estate: it is a sure, but a disguised method, by which all debts and all taxes are increased; confusion is its consequence in all the relations of society; for the nation is unable to bear low prices and high taxes joined; "The taxes of the late war, combined with the "prices that preceded it; the taxation of the paper "standard; the prices of the metal standard; an "amount of taxes, which could not have been "imposed in a bullion currency, a state of prices "which could not co-exist with large issues of "paper*."

Our present peace expenditure, in real money value, is more than equal to the expenditure in any average year of the last war. By the Fi-

* I am indebted to Mr. Attwood's admirable speech on Mr. Western's motion in 1823, not only for this sentence, but for many of the strongest arguments which I have used on this branch of the subject.

nance Accounts of 1825 the sum raised within the year, ending 5th January, was £.52,803,300. The nominal amount of Taxes in 1813, an expensive year of the most expensive war, was £.81,745,000*. The average price of gold that year was £.5. 6s. 2d.† per ounce, 36 4/9 per cent. more than the Mint price: and this being the admitted measure of depreciation at that time, £.81,745,000 in the paper currency of 1813 is only equal to £.52,236,000 in the metallic currency of 1825. Thus the taxation of 1824 was in real value somewhat heavier than the taxation of 1813.

The depreciation during the war has been estimated by none at less than one-fourth,—by many, and on the best grounds, at nearly one-half. So that from one-fourth, at the lowest, to one-half, at the highest, the money value of every man's property has been changed; and contracts for near a quarter of a century were founded on a measure of value, depreciated to this extent. But the public never obtain justice: they raised pensions and salaries to meet this debasement to its full amount; yet, on the restoration of the standard, no correspondent reduction has taken place. The salaries of the Judges were even augmented last year: the Superannuation Act only charges 10 per cent. on the salaries of official men; and the pay of the soldier, which, in 1792

* Vide Hansard's Par. Deb. vol. xiii. p. 14, Appendix.

† Edinburgh Review, No. lxxii. p. 411.

was 6*d.* a day, still remains at 13*d.* This is the class to which the Bullion Committee alluded in 1810, when it foretold, "that there were public "servants, whose pay, if once raised, in conse- "quence of depreciation, might not be so conve- "niently reduced to its former rate, even after "money shall have recovered its value." It is not always easy to deal with armed men; but there are other servants of the Crown, some of whom are the authors of these measures, whose salaries have been increased; and shall *they* be found among the few who profit at the expense of the community by this portentous change? Every rise in the value of money is an advance exactly equal on all pay derived from the revenue, and on all taxes borne by the people.

Already Mr. Peel's Bill has occasioned an immense transfer of property: it has conferred on the fundholder a benefit, to the extent of the depreciation of the money which he advanced; in many cases this is equal to 35 per cent. But this rise of the fundlord is effected by ruin of the landlord. Estates, which have been held from generation to generation in the same family, are rapidly changing owners; and as the country gentleman retires, the fundholder advances. The Government may view the change with indifference; the Treasury may continue to receive its taxes; but it is hard that the landed gentry should be driven from their hereditary possessions for the sake of a bonus to

the fundholder, to which he is by no means entitled. Both the nobility and gentry must fall from their high estate under the operation of this Act: their reduced rental must be absorbed in the necessary outgoings and fixed charges on their property, and nothing will be left to sustain the dignity of their rank and station.

Whether we regard private debts, or public burthens, the effects of the measure of 1819 have been to enact, that for every less sum owing a greater shall be paid: prices falling, but pecuniary engagements remaining undiminished, the farmer has no profit, the landlord no rent, the manufacturer no customer, the labourer no employment; a revolution of property, and a derangement of the whole frame of society, must necessarily ensue. This effect was produced in 1822; it was counteracted by the Small-Note Act of that year, and with its prospective repeal the same evil has reappeared.

It has been remarked by Mr. Hume, in his Essay on Money, that the interval between a decrease of the circulating medium and the adjustment of prices to a lower level, is always pernicious, in a peculiar degree, to industry. "The "workman has not the same employment, though "he pays the same price for every thing in the "market; the farmer cannot dispose of his corn "or cattle, though he must pay the same rent to "his landlord; the poverty, beggary, and sloth

"; which must ensue are easily foreseen." Industry, during this decline, is without employment, and even labour without its just reward.

The price of provisions and the wages of labour ultimately adjust themselves; and the condition of the labourer would then be the same as it was before the diminution of the quantity of money took place, if no tax existed on the necessaries of life. But in this country the articles of most extensive consumption, such as tea, malt, sugar, and tobacco, are taxed very heavily; and where taxation is mingled largely, the price cannot fall materially; the articles may cease to be consumed, but they cannot become cheap.

Where taxes of this nature exist, the effect of raising the value of money is essentially to degrade and to embitter the condition of the labourer*. "The wages of labour sink to the price "of corn; but the taxes remain, and must be "paid out of diminished earnings." There can be no doubt, that pauperism is the necessary effect of heavy taxation: even during the increase of the quantity of money (a period favourable to industry), the weight of taxation has exceeded the effect of depreciation, and the comforts of the working classes have diminished. In proportion to the increase of the population, less malt, less sugar, less tea, and less tobacco, were consumed even in the prosperous year 1825, than in the

* Par. Deb. vol. vi. p. 1628.

years immediately previous to 1793: and notwithstanding the improved management of the poor rates under select vestries, the gross amount is higher at this moment than in 1814,—higher in a restored, than in a depreciated currency; and the poor rates of England, which, at the commencement of the reign of George III. amounted only to £.600,000 per annum, average at this moment six millions annually.

It is to 1822 that we must look for the future state of affairs under the operation of Mr. Peel's Act; it was not even then in full force,—it was reserved for the measures of the last Session, passed with the entire concurrence of the country gentlemen, to establish it, as it exists at the present moment—absolutely triumphant.

Mark what was the evidence of Mr. Hanning before the Agricultural Committee of that year. He was speaking of the county of Somerset, the garden of England, and describing the condition of the lower orders in that district, at that particular time; and his account is in unison with the evidence given from other quarters with regard to the condition generally of the labouring poor. He says, "the small farmers and tradesmen are reduced to a scale of living little better than the labourers used to enjoy; and the labourers are now reduced to the necessity of living in a great degree on potatoes." In better times they "were in the habit of consuming a certain quan-

"tity of animal food, of bacon, or of cheese, "which they do not eat now; unquestionably "within the last two years their condition is de- "teriorated." This then is the sure effect, in England, of low wages and high taxes; but hear the result in Ireland as detailed by Mr. Nolan, in his evidence before the same Committee, a summary of which is thus powerfully conveyed in the words of Mr. Attwood:—"In Ireland, distress "is greatest when provisions are cheapest; then "we see famine without dearth; hunger amidst "superabundance of provisions; farmers without "a market; labourers without the means of "purchase. It was the fall of prices in which "famine originated: that fall prevented the "tenant from paying his rent; then came the "inferior landlord, bound by contract to the "superior landlord, and consequently unable to "make any abatement. The ground landlord "himself, bound by debts and engagements, all "founded on a state of high rents and high "prices, is equally unable to consent to a reduc- "tion. Then the miserable stock of the miserable "tenantry is seized; then the labourer is left des- "titute without employment, and then ensues a "scene of famine and despair, of tumult and of "bloodshed, suppressed by military force."

I will not pursue further this branch of the subject, nor drive home the application, which is obvious, of so painful a recital to the existing

state of our manufacturing population; it is enough for me to have shown, both from theory and repeated experience, that sudden contractions of the currency, with a fall of wages, and without a diminution of taxation, cannot fail to produce anarchy and want throughout the working classes of our community.

It is impossible to perpetuate in this country any legislative enactment, the tendency of which is to degrade and to impoverish the labouring classes; yet such is the decided effect both of our present Corn Laws, and of Mr. Peel's Act of 1819, unaccompanied by an adjustment of contracts, or adequate reduction of indirect taxes. The paramount duty of every Government is attention to the interests of the community, of which the labourers must form the great majority; the right of property itself is instituted for the good, not of the few who possess wealth and honours, but of the many who have them not; if the majority be deeply injured, the public peace is in danger; if the majority want food, private property becomes a nuisance.

Nor are the fatal effects of the sudden contraction of the currency peculiar to our time or country; for in France*, under Louis XIV. when the currency had been depreciated 27 per

* *Vide* POURBONNAIS, "*Considérations sur les Finances de France.*"

cent., and when an attempt was made to restore its value by reducing its amount, we find that the remedy was worse than the disease; that universal distress was the consequence; that all pecuniary contracts which had been previously made*, were raised one-third against the party who had to pay the money; that the restoration of full value was a death blow to the debtor; that the people were reduced to despair by the efforts of the Government to draw all the monies to themselves; and that there was scarcely a proprietor of land who did not see his patrimony melt away, without possessing the slightest means of prevention.

This is the present fate of the Land Owners of this country; they are striving in vain against engagements which they cannot meet. Creditors in general receive an undue proportion of earnings; and a sure, but destructive revolution, is in progress, by which, if it be not arrested, the ancient aristocracy of these realms must ultimately be sacrificed to creditors and annuitants.

The inconsistency of Mr. Huskisson on these subjects has been most flagrant: in 1815, when the Corn Laws were under discussion, we find him asserting, that corn in England must, and ought to be dear, as long as the country had to pay the existing taxes; that there could be no rent, if corn were not of a high price; and that it was

* Lord John Russell, vol. vi. p. 575. Par. Deb. New Series.

the duty of Parliament to uphold the landlord. I have already shown, that, allowance being made for the altered value of the currency, the present load of taxation, notwithstanding its nominal decrease, is, in real value, quite as oppressive as the imposts of 1815. The labours of Mr. Huskisson are now, however, directed, not to the remission of taxes, not to the curtailment of expenditure, but to the raising of the same revenue by better fiscal regulations, and to the maintenance of the expenses of the Government on a scale annually increasing; while he receives an augmentation of his nominal salary, he is bent even on enhancing the real value of money; and, having ceased to regard the fortunes of the Land Owner, he forgets his own maxim, that corn must not be cheap, and taxes heavy, at the same time.

Again, in 1823, "Mr. Huskisson admitted, "*that great injury was sustained by those landed* "*proprietors* whose properties were burthened by "acts over which they had no controul, and "also by persons who had mortgaged one estate "to purchase another. For *their* misfortunes "there seems to be no remedy. The parties so "situated were bound to abide the consequence of "such a speculation." To this class he was bound in justice to have added persons who had mortgaged a part of their estate to improve the cultivation of the whole; and then, I verily believe that nine-tenths of the Land Owners of this

United Empire, peers as well as commoners, are included in this general description.

In the session of 1794–5, on the motion of Sir John Sinclair, in the House of Commons, "It was "resolved unanimously, to promote the improve- "ment of the waste and unproductive lands of the "country, *as a most essential public advantage.*"

This unanimous resolution stands unrepealed. So does the resolution of 1811,—the eternal monument of Mr. Vansittart's fame,—a vote in which a large majority declared, that the one-pound note at that time was worth twenty shillings; that things unequal in value in the market, were equal in public estimation. On the faith of these resolutions, to which Parliament remains pledged, stimulated by the false abundance of capital, and fearing nothing from a depreciation so solemnly denied, the Land Owners expended immense sums in the improvement of waste land, and burthened their estates for a purpose which the Legislature declared to be "of essential pub- lic advantage:" and shall this same Legislature now bid the owners of the soil abide the conse- quences of their speculation,—a speculation fostered by Parliament, and by Parliament made ruinous? Is the day arrived, when a minister of the crown can contemplate with complacency the destruction of an entire class, and that class the Land Owners of these realms? For I protest, that the number of proprietors, with estates unencumbered, forms

so small a minority, as to make Mr. Huskisson's description, for all practical purposes, a designation of the whole body.

Yet this is the gentleman who in the same year asserted, that "if he could believe there was the "slightest foundation for the fear that the restored "value of the currency would ruin the aristocracy, "and tear them from their paternal estates, the evil "was of so grave a nature, that he would be pre-"pared to seek a remedy at whatever risk." No doubt the aristocracy is an object of tender care to this gentleman; but they amply deserve what they will suffer, if they trust their interests to his keeping.

The third resolution carried by Mr. Vansittart in 1811, stands on the journals of the House of Commons, a public record; and it avers, "that "the promissory notes of the Bank of England "have hitherto been, and are at this time, held in "public estimation to be equivalent to the "legal coin of the realm, and generally accepted "as such in all pecuniary transactions, to which "such coin is lawfully applicable." Both Lord Castlereagh, and also Mr. Perceval, who then was prime minister, gloried so triumphantly in the unlimited issue of paper, that Mr. Canning observed at the time, in his admirable reply, that in the view of the supporters of Mr. Vansittart's resolution (who were by the way a very large majority), "the Bank restriction had become the staple

" resource of our pecuniary system; that it was " avowed as the *standing policy of the state*; to " be prized as an invention long desired, and now " happily found, for supplying boundless exertion " with inexhaustible and unexhausting finances." Mr. Perceval even went the full length of contending, that a reduction of the paper currency would change the value of existing contracts, and would throw into confusion every pecuniary transaction, from the rent of the landlord down to the wages of the peasant and artisan; upon which Mr. Canning exclaims, " Good God! What is " this but to say, that the system of irredeemable " paper currency *must continue for ever?*" Mr. Tierney, also, on the same occasion observes, " that " an unlimited issue of paper had at first been " proposed as a measure of necessity—now it was " supported as a system of public advantage." Sir Francis Burdett also forcibly applied to the paper system, as then established, the inscription on the gates of Dante's hell, which bids all those who enter, leave the hope of return behind; and he foretold, most distinctly, the impossibility of returning to a sound state of the currency, without those collateral safeguards, the whole of which were omitted in 1819; and he foresaw, even in 1811, the inability of the country to pay in sound coin, of standard value, the large pensions and salaries existing at that time, together with the pay of the army and navy, and the interest of the

debt, swollen to its enormous magnitude; the whole of which were established with the view to a progressive state of depreciation.

Yet, notwithstanding these warnings, and the admissions of the Government, not founded in error, but accurate in the extreme, that a diminution of the currency would occasion a fall of prices, to the entire subversion of existing contracts, "the convulsion of public credit, and the "probable interruption of national industry*," Mr. Vansittart's resolution, negativing depreciation, was carried, and is unrepealed.

If such then were the approved merits of the paper system, and such the danger of a return to a metallic currency, announced by a leading minister of the crown, and backed by a solemn decision of the House of Commons; and if, by repeated acts of the Legislature, the resumption of cash payments was postponed, as it were, indefinitely, even long after the conclusion of the war, the limit once assigned; who can with justice blame the Land Owner, when, relying on the pledged opinion of the Government, sanctioned by Parliament itself, he did not anticipate the return to a metallic currency, but fearlessly continued to buy, sell, mortgage, portion, jointure, and contract, in an inconvertible paper currency, which

* These were the very words used by the late Lord Londonderry.

he was justified in considering permanent, and which the House of Commons had declared not to be depreciated?

The Land Owner was thus beguiled into borrowing to an amount on which he never would have ventured, could he have foreseen the fall of the price of wheat to 43*s.* a quarter; and this was the average of the year 1822.

In 1812, the year after the resolution of the House of Commons which negatived the depreciation of bank paper, the average price of wheat was 125*s.* a quarter. A prudent Land Owner might *then* reasonably have calculated on a probable fall from 125 to 70 or 80, after the return of peace; but notwithstanding the false denial contained in Mr. Vansittart's resolution, the currency at that very moment was depreciated 30 per cent.; and, acting under the delusion practised on him by Parliament, the Land Owner never adverted, in the valuation of his property, to this appalling circumstance, but borrowed and provided for his wife and children, estimating the one-pound note to be worth 20*s.* when in reality it was worth but 14*s.*: but now, either he or his heir is compelled to pay the debt, or to satisfy the settlement, not in a currency depreciated 30 per cent. but in coin restored to the ancient standard value. The proprietor dying, or coming to a new settlement by deed with his eldest son, at any period between 1809 and 1814, may have charged his property to

the extent of one half of the then rental, leaving, as he imagined, a large income for his heir in the residue of the rent. The natural fall of prices, after the transition from war to peace, might have reduced his income to a considerable extent; yet, all articles of general consumption falling proportionally, the heir in possession might be able to maintain his place in society. But in addition to this natural fall, comes the artificial one, arising from the Bill of 1819, which, by decreasing the quantity of money, lowers the price of wheat, and by restoring the standard, adds to the value of money. The decline of price bears down with it the rental; the restored value of money adds to the fixed incumbrances; and thus the nett income may be merged in the rent charge upon it, and the unhappy owner be either destitute, or dependant on the good will of his creditors and relations. Cases of this nature are not imaginary; they are to be met with at every turn, in every part of the country. Their hardship of course will vary in degree, according to the period of the depreciation when the fixed incumbrances were imposed.

I will suppose a case of the head of a family dying in 1813, and leaving a rental of £ 5,000 a year to his eldest son, with a jointure to his widow of £.1,000 a year, and a rent charge in the shape of annuities to younger children, to the extent of £.1,500 a year more. The father had made his

will in 1792, and under that will had assigned to his widow £.500 a year, and to his younger children an annuity of £.750; but the rental of the property was then only £.3,000 per annum: with the depreciation of the war the rental rose, before 1813, to £.5,000 a year; and the proprietor, revoking his former will in the year of his death, doubled his wife's jointure, and the annuities of his younger children. The mint price of gold that year was £.5. 10s. per ounce; and consequently the depreciation of paper 41 per cent. Nothing could be more fair than this increase to the family burthens, at the time when it was made, and according to the rate of the then existing prices; but the change has proved ruinous to the heir; the Legislature itself has defrauded him; the depreciation by which his father was deceived in 1813, is now not only avowed, but remedied, by Act of Parliament; the annuitants on his estate enjoy their double incomes, and pay their half prices; he receives his half rental, and pays the double annuity. What then is the alternative which presents itself? Either he must drag out a degraded existence on his paternal estate, exercising no more the hospitality of his ancestors, but gleaning from his tenantry their earnings or their savings, himself the hated steward of the annuitant and mortgagee; or, unlike the country gentleman of England in an happier day, he must leave his native home,

become a wanderer abroad, or a jobber, a share dealer, a placeman in the metropolis. He may sell his estate indeed, but

——————— "*Vici* pervenimus, advena nostri,
"Quod nunquam veriti sumus, ut possessor agelli
"Diceret, hæc mea sunt, veteres migrate coloni?"

This would be considered only as a *transfer* of property; but what agony of mind does that word convey? The snapping of a chain, linked perhaps by centuries; the destruction of the dearest local attachments, the dissolution of the earliest friendships, the violation of the purest feelings of the heart. Politicians and philosophers may talk coldly of the transfer of old family estates, of throwing immense tracts of the inferior soil out of cultivation, of burying for ever the immense capital expended on it, and of the transfusion of an agricultural into a manufacturing population; but let them remember the ties which must be broken, the villages which must be deserted, the gardens to be laid desolate, the second nature of habits which must be altered, the hearts which must sink, and the hands which may rebel, under trials such as these. Let them pause before they commence the experiment: let them hearken to the warning voice of Mr. Brougham, himself a giant in their ranks, who, when contemplating this very change, which had been termed the ruin of the landed interest, with equal truth and eloquence observes, that it is not

meant that "the proprietors would be destroyed, "that the land would become sterile, or sink in the "sea, and the owners be exterminated. No: "what is to be understood by the ruin of a great "class, and by the destruction of the most com- "manding interest in the country, is shortly this: "a great change of property; much individual "misery; the whole relations of the class de- "stroyed, or the relations of that class to the rest "of society, and of its members to each other. "Such may be called the destruction of a class; "when it happens to a community, it becomes "the destruction of a state."

Every man, of any degree of authority, has admitted distinctly that he under-rated, in 1819, the pressure which the return to the ancient standard would occasion; and so little was the effect of Mr. Peel's Bill understood, that, in the very session of Parliament in which it passed, three millions of new taxes were imposed, although 10 per cent. was admitted by Mr. Ricardo to have been added to the previous burthen, and experience has since demonstrated that the real addition approached much nearer to 40. And shall the Land Owners of this United Kingdom tamely acquiesce in the operation of a measure, the nature of which was not understood even by those who advocated it, but, the effect of which has proved more burthensome than its supporters contemplated, or the nation can bear? Let me

entreat them to depart from their usual course of awaiting the event: a great and an immediate effort is necessary to burst the cord now drawn so tight around them;—if they hesitate, they will be entangled in such complicated difficulties, that resistance and escape will soon be alike impossible.

The major part of the jointures and portions, fixed previous to 1797, must have now expired; and the settlements which are at present in operation, have, in most cases, been framed on the scale of high prices, and of a depreciated currency. The reduction of the landlord's rent since the passing of Mr. Peel's Act, in 1819, has been, on the average, at least thirty per cent.; the addition to the debts, the mortgages, the settled incumbrances on his property, is equal to the increased value of money, which, with Mr. Baring, I am disposed to estimate at thirty per cent. or even with Mr. Attwood, at a higher rate. Mr. Peel's Bill never would have passed if these effects had been foreseen.

At that time, it would have been infinitely more just to have established a new standard of value. Whether we regard the tremendous public debt contracted, the pay of public servants increased, and the taxes consequently imposed, in the twenty-two years of uninterrupted depreciation; or whether we contemplate the extensive private engagements formed within that period and remaining now to be fulfilled, we can only arrive at the conclusion, that the Bill of 1819 was

founded on error, and that injustice is its consequence.

The holders of Stock, created prior to 1797, must be very few; and they who sold out *during* the war, and invested their depreciated capital in land or trade, are now receiving the full measure of injustice; depreciation defrauded them as public creditors; the restoration of the standard now oppresses them as tax-payers and public debtors.

But the ancient landlord's position is still more hopeless: *in addition* to the public burthens, he is required to meet with a reduced rental the fixed and increased charges on his property: ruin *must* be his fate: and his tenants and his labourers will sink with him; the former from the weight of their fixed engagements; the latter from want of employment, and a fall of wages greater than the reduction of taxation. In such a state of affairs we must come to a tenantry without capital or leases, and to a population eking out existence by potatoes.

Every landlord who grants a lease, delivers over his valuable property for a term of years, relying on the confident assurance, which the laws confirm, that he shall be permitted to receive the stipulated equivalent in value throughout the duration of the term. Any alteration in the value of the currency destroys the equity of the agreement; if it be an act of the Legislature, the injustice is accomplished by an *ex post facto* law. No reasonable man, be he landlord, or be he tenant, can place his dependence on the faith of

contracts which the caprice of the Government, or the fleeting interests of the Bank of England, may render ruinous or advantageous, contrary to the just intention of the contracting parties. A lease is now a gambling policy of insurance on the value of the currency for a given period; and, in fact, the loss eventually and invariably falls on the landlord; for if, during the currency of the lease, the coin be depreciated, the tenant adheres to his bargain, and derives the entire profit; if the value of the currency be restored, then, as we have lately seen in 1821 and 1822, the strict letter of the lease is of no avail to the landlord: the tenant becomes insolvent, and the contract is abrogated; or the force of public opinion, in this country more powerful than law, compels the landlord to reduce the rent to the full amount of the altered value of money; and every such alteration, therefore, is certain loss to him. It is not here my purpose to enlarge on the advantages which flow from leases for a term of years; the high honour and fair dealing of the old hereditary English landlord, in happier times, may have superseded their necessity; but in these mercantile days of heavy losses and immense profits, whilst almost every man, to retain his station in society, is driven to shifts and to expedients, it is impossible to expect that great capital should be invested in the improved cultivation of the soil, unless the profits of such speculation be secured for a stated

period; and the returns from land being slow, that period must be distant. During the term, the tenant reaps the profit,—at the expiration of it, the landlord receives back his property, improved in value; yet, after the recent and dreadful lessons of legislative injustice which have marked the frequent tampering with our currency, land must be occupied from year to year. Landlords will fear to assign their property for a larger term; no man will buy, no man will sell, no man will improve land, until, after a solemn revision, the whole system of our currency and of our Corn Laws has been placed on a solid ground, affording fixed security of future value.

The fall, also, in the nominal value of wages, without a reduction of taxes, degrades, as I have shown, the situation of the labourer, whether he be agricultural or manufacturing; for money earnings are diminished by the restored value of currency, while money burthens are proportionally increased. And I have proved, that no diminution of taxation has taken place, since 1819, at all equal to counterbalance the weight added to the load by the increased value of money.

What, then, must happen on the recurrence of war? Either the debt must be obliterated, or an unlimited issue of paper must be resumed; and, amidst all the horrors of the French revolution, the assignats are the beacon most to be avoided. Would it not then be wise to avert this alternative? Self-preservation is the first law of states, as

well as of individuals—the inalienable right of every community. An invasion is threatened; rebellion rages; the burthen of taxation becomes intolerable; the means of safety are in the hands of the Government: the money provided for the quarterly dividend is lying in the Exchequer; and then, in the prophetic words of Mr. Hume, "Necessity calls, fear urges, reason exhorts, "compassion alone exclaims:—the money will be "seized for the current service, perhaps under "solemn protestations of being immediately re- "placed. But no more is requisite. The whole "fabric, already tottering, falls to the ground, "and buries thousands in its ruins. This may "be called the natural death of public credit; for "to this period it tends as naturally as an animal "body to its dissolution and destruction." The interest, therefore, of the creditor must urge him to compound with the debtor before he drive him to desperation. To-day, while it is called to-day, he may obtain reasonable terms and secure his property in peace; but a little while, and the opportunity will be gone. "The public is a "debtor, whom no man, and no body of men, "can oblige to pay. Present necessity forces "states into measures *against* their interests; and "the interest of preserving credit, the only in- "terest binding on the public debtor, may easily "be over-balanced by the amount of the debt "and by a difficult emergency."

At the close of the war, when prices began to

fall, in consequence of the contraction of the currency of the Bank of England, Mr. Malthus avowed his opinion, that great injustice would be consummated, if the national debt were not adjusted according to these prices, as by a standard. His words are of such importance, and embrace so fully the doctrines for which I venture to contend, that I may, perhaps, be excused for quoting them at length: "If the price of corn were to "fall to 50*s.* a quarter, and labour and other "commodities nearly in proportion, there can be "no doubt that the stock holder would be benefited unfairly at the expense of the industrious "classes of society. During the 20 years, beginning with 1794, and ending with 1813, "the average price of wheat was about 83*s.*; "during 10 years, ending with 1813, 92*s.*; and "during the last five years of this same 20, the "price was 108*s.* In the course of these 20 "years, Government borrowed near 500 millions "of real capital, exclusive of the sinking fund, at "the rate of about 5 per cent. interest. But if "corn shall fall to 50*s.* a quarter, and other commodities in proportion, instead of an interest "of 5 per cent., the Government will really pay "an interest of 7, 8, and 9, and for the last 200 "millions, of 10 per cent.

"This must be paid by the industrious classes "of society, and by the landlords; that is, by all "those whose nominal incomes vary with the "variations in the measure of value; and if we

"completely succeed in the reduction of the price of corn and labour, this increased interest must be paid in future from a revenue of about *half* the nominal value of the national income in 1813. If we consider with what an increased weight the taxes on tea, sugar, malt, soap, candles, &c. would in this case bear on the labouring classes of society; and what proportion of their income all the active industrious middle orders of the State, as well as the higher orders, must pay, in assessed taxes and the various articles of custom and excise, the pressure will appear to be absolutely intolerable. Indeed, if the measure of value were really to fall as we have supposed, there is great reason to fear that the country would be *absolutely unable to continue the payment of the present interest of the national debt.*" The case which Mr. Malthus here supposes, is now actually realised. Corn, the measure of value, to which he refers, fell in 1822 to 40*s.* a quarter, and this was a scale of reduction lower even than he contemplated. I have endeavoured to prove, that this was the inevitable consequence of Mr. Peel's Act of 1819; that the subsequent rise of price arose only from the enlargement of currency occasioned by the Small Note Act, passed in 1822; that the repeal of this last measure, and the full operation of Mr. Peel's enactment, must of necessity bring back the prices of 1822; that the opinion of a

deficient supply, recently confirmed by the assertions of the Government, alone has prevented the fall to this scale at the present moment; and that, the value of money being the same, the price of wheat must on an average, and permanently, be the same, as it remained in this country from 1688 to 1792; this average price I have proved, on conclusive evidence, to be 50*s.* a quarter; but the substitution of gold *alone*, for gold and silver *conjointly*, has raised the standard even still higher than it was fixed in the reign of King William; and of course the natural tendency of price will be to sink to a still lower level—45*s.* a quarter, therefore, under the system of money now sought to be established, must be our maximum in a long series of years. All the reasoning of Mr. Malthus may be applied, then, with truth, to the existing state of affairs; and we are on the very eve of that juncture, "When we shall be absolutely unable "to continue the payment of the present interest "of the national debt."

The parliamentary pledge so frequently given, and at last so fatally redeemed, of returning to cash payments at the end of the war, was broken at the peace of Amiens by Lord Sidmouth, notwithstanding the entreaty of the Bank Directors, to be allowed at that time to resume their payments in specie; and though the war ended in 1815, no step was taken towards the resumption of cash payments till 1819; but Mr. Vansittart's

resolution of 1811, which stands unrepealed on the journals, must be held to be a legislative assurance, still in full force, that no debtor would be required to pay more than he had contracted for during the war, or more than he had received.

The resolution, unrepealed, must be allowed at least to balance the enactment so often broken; and when Mr. Peel passed his bill in 1819, he did not venture to touch Mr. Vansittart's resolution; the Land Owner was not, therefore, conscious of the real nature of the bargain which he made; it was obtained under false pretences; it was adopted in delusion; and equity forbids (whatever creditors may have suffered during the war), that debtors should be permanently oppressed by the effects of the restoration of the standard, which a false resolution of the House of Commons declares never to have varied.

The natural and obvious train of this reasoning would seem, indeed, to lead to the immediate repeal of the act of 1819, and to the revival of the Bank restriction. I am not, however, prepared to palliate or to deny the flagrant evils of a system, which destroyed any fixed measure of value in this country, which banished the precious metals from our shores, and which gave to an inconvertible paper currency the credit due only with safety to coin of intrinsic worth.

Nay, I am even ready to admit that recent experience has baffled theory; and that small notes

nominally convertible, but subject to no other check than their convertibility, produce in practice and in effect all the mischiefs attached to paper, which is *not* convertible; consequently that no safe substitute can be found for a metallic currency, however expensive, and that no notes ought to circulate within these realms for any sum under £.5.

Nevertheless, if I be not egregiously deceived, very few of the Members of either House of Parliament, who voted for Mr. Peel's bill in 1819, would now, after the experience acquired in the interval, sanction a change so fearful in its operation, *unaccompanied* by those measures of precaution, which were then unfortunately omitted, and which still remain indispensable.

It is not, therefore, the repeal of this act which it behoves the Land Owners to seek, although its present unmitigated force must work the ruin of the state; it seems to me, that their united efforts should be directed to supply the defects occasioned by want of foresight in 1819, and to equalize the weight of the burthen created and imposed by the addition to the value of money, now about to become permanent.

It is not attempted to deny, that some injustice must be the result of any effort to remedy the existing evil; but when the currency of a country has once been depreciated by the acts of its Legislature, perfect justice to *all* becomes absolutely

hopeless. The only question left is, how shall the greatest sum of injustice be avoided?

The acts of 1797, and of 1819, were equal violations of property, an equal interference with pre-existent contracts; the one was a fraud on creditors, the other a fraud on debtors. The spoliation which has been effected cannot now be redressed, but its progress may be arrested: we may stay the hand of the destroyer, and save the class last robbed from utter ruin. The time elapsed since 1819, may render it on the whole perhaps inexpedient again to depreciate the standard; for, to use the words of Mr. Baring, "in questions of currency, time is every thing." Having re-adopted the ancient standard now for *seven* years, should we not, by a fresh depreciation, wantonly disturb the contracts made within that period, and at the expense of fresh injustice, obtain only a partial remedy for antecedent wrong?

An equitable adjustment of contracts must be admitted to be impossible. The individuals constituting the great body of debtors and creditors, are changing day by day; one man made the original contract ten years ago, and another has purchased the annuity within the last ten days: a transfer also has probably taken place repeatedly in the interval; and the pound note may have varied in value, according to the date of each transaction, from 14 shillings up to 20.

It was observed by Mr. Fox, on the passing of the Bank Restriction Act in 1797*, "that he "who talks of positive plans to go at once to the "disease, who hopes to produce great good "without hazarding some evil, is not the person "from whom, in a situation like the present, "much advantage is to be expected. All that is "left, is a choice of evils. He that talks rationally "will rejoice if he can discover a remedy that, "with a mixture of evil, will be able to overcome "the mortality of the disease." And this is again our sad predicament: it is the most fatal part of the accumulated misfortunes of our situation, that it is impossible to embrace any remedy applicable to the evil, on the one hand, without also committing some injury on the other.

"I will not, therefore, attempt to deny, that the course which I shall presume to recommend to the Land Owners, is open to grave objections, and that it must produce considerable injustice; but if it save the Aristocracy—if it save the Landed Interest, it will also restore vigour to our commerce and plenty to our labouring poor; it will inflict partial injury on a few, but it will bestow lasting benefit on the community.

"I will assume, that I have proved the impolicy of our Corn Laws, and the injurious effects inherent in the Paper System, creating at one time an

* Vol. xxxiii. p. 44. Par. Deb.

unsound prosperity, and producing at another unnatural depression; a system which makes value uncertain, and prosperity precarious; which forces speculation and over-trading, and in its reaction, during the stagnation of trade and manufactures, causes that general want of employment which, at this awful crisis, a starving population experiences. But the Paper System has just received its death-blow; the fixed standard of value has been restored; measures are in progress which will secure a metallic currency for all sums under five pounds; and it remains only to alleviate the crushing weight of taxes, and to obtain a steady supply of corn at a moderate price.

The last object will be obtained by a repeal of the present Corn Laws, and by constant importation under a fixed duty—a duty, as I have before stated, equal to the exclusive burthens borne by the land; and, for this purpose, I am disposed to believe, that 15 shillings a quarter will be ample, if the Landed Interest insist on the execution of the further measures which I shall now venture to detail.

While the monopoly of the Bank of England is suffered to continue, even the suppression of the one and two pound notes is no adequate security against over-issues. Competition is the only legitimate check,—that competition of banking capital, which would keep the circulation of this country uniformly at the level of the value of

money in foreign countries, and which *alone* can prevent excessive issues; since any attempt at excess would be instantly returned, on the Bank making the experiment, by the other banks, its rivals. And, on this head, Adam Smith* truly observes, that competition obliges all banks to be more circumspect in their conduct, and, by not extending their paper beyond its due proportion to their cash, to guard themselves against those malicious runs, which the rivalship of so many competitors is always ready to bring upon them. It restrains the circulation of each particular company within a narrower circle, and reduces their circulating notes to a smaller number; and it obliges all bankers to be more liberal in their dealings with their customers, lest rival establishments carry them away.

Since we must then have a free trade in corn, let us have also a free trade in money, and destroy that fatal connexion between the Government and a single Chartered Bank, which facilitates the prodigality of the Ministers, and invests an irresponsible body with the most delicate and important function of state—the controul over the circulating medium.

Nor will it be wise to stop even at this point; if the Land Owner is to give up *his* monopoly for the public good, shall the East India Company

* Wealth of Nations, Book xi., end of chap. 2.

and the West India Proprietors be suffered, for one day, to retain the full enjoyment of *their* exclusive privileges? Shall the consumer be forced to pay an exorbitant price for his tea and for his sugar, that particular interests may be benefited; and shall the nobility and gentry of these realms, the owners of the native soil, *alone* be sacrificed? On the contrary, let us adopt the sound principles of free trade; but let us not limit their application to the staple produce of our land. Let us destroy the heavy duties on timber, which, at the expense of every man building a ship or a house in the mother country, are at best a paltry premium to our colonies; and since we are bent on establishing an open competition with the foreign manufacturer, let us at once reduce largely those taxes which affect both the commerce and manufactures of our country.

It is not the price of bread alone, which is a check to our industry; on the contrary, I am well convinced, that its effect is insignificant, compared with the weight of taxation to which I have here alluded; and every notion of free trade is worse than visionary, unless accompanied by a large reduction of taxes and of duties. It is clear that the Government itself so considers it; for, notwithstanding the boasted triumph of principles termed *liberal*, it has been deemed necessary, in the recent example of the silk trade, to protect the British manufacturer by a duty of thirty per

cent. on foreign silks imported, although he is subject to no direct tax on the raw material which he uses; but his claim for compensation, in the shape of this large protecting duty, is founded and admitted distinctly on the ground, that competition with the foreigner must be ruinous, while in this country taxes on consumption are enforced to an extent unknown abroad; and oppressive, not to the manufacturer alone, but equally to the agriculturist and every member of the community.

The experiment of the destruction of monopoly in one branch of industry, while it is suffered to continue with unabated force in others, is an outrage even of the semblance of justice; it is a shifting of the burthen from the protected to the unprotected, from the strong to the weak; and the Landed Interest is lost indeed, if it allow for one moment an experiment of this nature to be made on its property.

The course, therefore, to be adopted by them, is to consent to a revision of the Corn Laws, to consent to free importation with a moderate protecting duty, but to force also at the same time a revision of all other monopolies, and to carry a reduction of taxes to a very large amount.

The sinking fund of five millions annually is, in the first place, available; and then, inasmuch as I have proved, that Mr. Peel's Bill in full operation will be a bonus to the annuitant of

more than 30 per cent., I strenuously and boldly contend, both for the equity and the necessity of imposing a direct tax to a considerable amount on *all* annuities charged on land, or payable from the Exchequer.

There is, indeed, another alternative,—to rescind Mr. Peel's Act, and to restore the paper circulation to the highest level of the war, and of 1817. The price of bullion would then rise, and the war standard of depreciation be distinctly indicated; that standard of the great mass of our debts and contracts, the measure of the rise of our greatest interests. We then might debase our metal standard to the precise level of the depreciated paper currency; and, having lowered our measure of value, adjust it to the existing interests, and contracts created in paper money, and issue, for the ordinary purposes of circulation, coin of less intrinsic worth. But this is an *indirect* way of doing the same thing: it possesses all the evil of delusion. It blinds the nation to the real inevitable consequence of an expenditure beyond our means; it is a bankruptcy without an admission of insolvency: it would lead to still further prodigality, and to a repetition of the same mischief, and of the same cure: moreover, it would render perpetual the cost of that expensive machinery, which is necessary for the collection of our present amount of taxes.

But the tax on all annuitants is a direct avowal

29348

of the inability to pay according to the full amount of our ancient standard; it is a memorial to all governments and to all nations, that there are limits *beyond* which taxation cannot be carried; that, in common prudence, there are bounds even to national expenditure; and that war is a game, not of profit, but of loss. It will operate as a wholesome check on our future financial measures. The hope of reducing the tax itself will render the Monied Interest jealous of extravagance, and advocates of economical reform; and it will enable us at once to get rid, not only of taxes, but of a host of tax gatherers.

The remission of the taxes which interfere most with our trade and manufactures, and enhance the price of articles of first necessity to the consumer, will be covered by the application of the £.5,000,000 sinking fund to the service of the year, and by the amount of the proposed annuity tax. It is impossible to foresee the extent of the rapid progress which our commerce would make, when relieved from the burthens which now press it to the ground: and since *all* taxes fall in the first instance on the consumer, and are ultimately borne by the profits of capital, or by capital itself, a remission of taxes is a benefit to *all*, and *not exclusively* to any particular class. To the tax payer the benefit is direct and immediate; and it is no stretch of imagination to foresee the great increase of comfort which would ensue to the

entire body of the people, if the taxes on tea, on sugar, on tobacco, and on malt, were greatly reduced, and the assessed taxes, and the tax on soap and candles, absolutely repealed. The legacy tax, also, on the transmission of personal property, which presses hard on the monied interest, might then also with fairness be remitted. The proposed annuity tax would cover all these beneficial changes. But the annuitant is himself a great consumer, and would derive an immense profit from the reduction of indirect taxation; consequently his real loss would be by no means the amount of the tax; for what the *direct* tax may take from him, the remission of *indirect taxes* would in a great measure restore.

A high rate of profit produces a high rate of interest; and the addition to the income of the capitalist from this source, coupled with the diminution of the annuitant's expenditure, from the fall in the price of corn, and of all the necessary articles of life, which the execution of this plan would secure, leads me, in my conscience, to believe, that the weight of an annuity tax, such as in fairness could be imposed, would not create any real loss, or operate as a privation, to the annuitant himself. Though *nominally* his income might be diminished, yet *really* his means of purchasing all the comforts and conveniences of life would, in no degree, be impaired.

The only annuitants who *must* suffer, would be

the annuitants now living abroad; if they be natives, I cannot compassionate their lot, when their interest will no longer militate with their duties; and when, without a sacrifice of income, they may return to the land of their fathers. If they be foreigners, I regret the hardship of their case; but I contend for its necessity; and our national prosperity must not be endangered for the sake of our credit with strangers.

It will be argued, however, that the effect of the annuity tax will be, to drive capital abroad; to this there are two answers;—first, that the very discussion of the measure will so depress the price of funds, as to render the immediate loss of principal by sales fully equivalent to the diminution of the annual interest by the tax; and secondly, even if capital be withdrawn from the funds, it by no means follows that it will be sent abroad; for, by the diminution of taxation, and by the decreased price of corn, the rate of profit will immediately rise in this country, and capital may be invested here, under such circumstances, with more than ordinary advantage.

Again it will be contended, that the mortgagee will instantly foreclose in every case, and seek to regain his principal for the purpose of investing it beyond the reach of this impost. It would not be impossible to devise a special remedy for this difficulty; since, even *without* any legislative interference, the Lord Chancellor,

during the war, in the exercise of a sound discretion, frequently granted to the mortgager a greater length of time for the repayment of the principal than the contract stipulated. I am not, however, disposed to believe, that an annuity tax would disturb many existing mortgages; for the greater part of the money so invested consists either of trust funds, or of the capital of public bodies; neither the one nor the other can be sent abroad; the investment must be in this country, and a transfer from land to funds would avail nothing; for, by the original supposition, the annuity tax would be an *equal* impost on the mortgagee, and on the fundholder. Some few bold individuals might venture to call up their money, and to embark it in trade, or to place it in foreign funds; but the risk in some cases, and the impossibility in others, of changing the investment, would, in effect, be tantamount to an actual prohibition. Moreover, fresh capital would not be wanting to supply the place of the mortgages called in; since the relief to the Landed Interest, by means of the tax proposed, would increase the value of property, and improve the real security to the lender.

It may be asked, why this tax should not be extended to the merchant and the manufacturer? I answer, because the prosperity of the state requires, under the heavy load of debt which would still remain, that every incentive should be applied

to stimulate industry, and to increase the power of production. The merchant and the manufacturer, as well as the Land Owner, are the producers, the mortgagee and the Fundholder the sluggards; every tax on the former is a tax on industry, and capital accumulating; every tax on the latter is a tax on indolence, and capital hoarded. Encouragement given to the productive classes generates a ten-fold increase of national wealth; cut the cords, the balloon rises of itself; lighten the taxes, which oppress trade and manufactures, they will thrive at once, and enrich our people.

It will be said that the physician and the lawyer, as well as the mortgagee and the fundholder, belong to the unproductive class; and yet, that the proposed annuity tax will not visit them. Where fees by statute, or by rule of court, have been raised during the war, in compensation for the depreciated currency, by statute, or by rule of court, they must again be reduced, in conformity with the increased value of money: where custom alone has added to their amount, custom also will soon provide the remedy; and the public will not be slow to discover the folly of paying the same fee to the doctor and the advocate, with wheat at 50*s.* a quarter, and gold at £.3. 17*s.* 10½*d.* an ounce, as lately in justice they paid, when wheat was 120*s.* and gold £.5. 10*s.* 0*d.*

Again, it may be urged against the justice of this measure, that, though the currency of the

country was really depreciated for a quarter of a century, yet that there were repeated parliamentary pledges, that at the termination of the war the ancient standard should be restored; and, therefore, that in all contracts during that time, reference was had to an expected return to cash payments. The answer is, that these pledges were broken as often as they were given; and that Mr. Vansittart's resolution still stands unrepealed, which, in one of the years when the market price of bullion was highest, negatives, by a solemn decision of the House of Commons, the fact of depreciation; and the late Lord Londonderry, the principal minister of the Crown, in his place in Parliament, even in the year 1822, on the subject of agricultural distress, used these remarkable words: *"It is not meant, that under *no possible* "*contingency* any alteration could take place in "the currency of the country, as now established; "but that at *the present moment* there is no ground "for departing from sound principles on the sub-"ject." He fended off the immediate necessity, by the introduction of the Small Note Act; its repeal has reproduced it, and now is the appointed moment for a direct tax on the annuitant, in effect equivalent, but greatly to be preferred, to the change which Lord Londonderry then contemplated, alluding to a fresh debasement of the standard.

* Par. Deb. vol. vii. p. 1021.

Then comes the general outcry of horror at a breach of faith, and the violation of existing contracts. All this tender feeling and scrupulous justice would have been mighty well in 1797; it would have weight even now, if no previous interference had taken place between debtor and creditor; but twice, since the commencement of the French war, have the present Ministers of the Crown disturbed every fixed money bargain, by direct legislative interposition. Who, in 1797, said to every creditor, "Though you stipulated for "repayment in coin of the realm, you shall receive "nothing but paper?"—Who, in 1819, when a contract had been made, said to every debtor, "You shall not pay that which you have agreed "to pay, but something else, which you neither "agreed nor expected to pay: you borrowed at "the rate of 15*s.* you shall pay at the rate of "20*s.*?" On the ground of *public convenience*, the ancient standard was overturned in 1797; and on the same grounds it is equitable to demand a mitigation of the effects of its forced restoration.

When, in consequence of the rise of prices during the depreciation, advance of salary, or of pay, was demanded by public servants, the equitable adjustment was, in these cases, carried by acclamation, and the subjects were taxed without compunction, to meet the increase of pay and of pensions, then to be raised to the level of the higher prices; but with the fall of prices, and with

the restored value of the currency, we hear of no intention to reduce these annuities to their former scale; and placemen, living on salaries increased *both nominally and really*, have the boldness to decry the very term of adjustment as synonymous with fraud.

The acquiescence of the Land Owners, throughout the war, in the curtailment of the annuities charged on their estates, by the means of the depreciation of the currency, has been urged as a reason against their claim for adjustment, on the restoration of the standard; but no doctrine can be more dangerously unsound; it seeks to introduce a principle of compensation into morals, that an act of iniquity in one direction may be compensated by a countervailing act of injustice in another; and that because, in 1797, the creditor was defrauded, it is just, in 1819, to injure the debtor; when, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, the individuals and the contracts are different, on which this operation is to be performed*.

"The case of the greatest hardship which can be put, is that of a mortgagee, who lent his money

* In 1821, Mr. Mushet published some most elaborate Tables, tending to show, that on the balance of profit and loss arising from the changes in the value of currency between the years 1800 and 1821, the sum of £.1,454,060 still remained due to the public creditor. Even admitting the principle and the accuracy of these Tables, I should contend that the balance is *now* in favour of the debtor, since from

prior to 1797, and who, during the war, received his interest in a depreciated currency, and will now be a second time defrauded, since the full measure of 1819 was to him only an act of simple justice. It would be vain to palliate the hardship of his case; but it is the very gist of my argument, that cruel injustice must flow, of necessity, from all tampering with the currency. It is *not now* the question, whether it shall be done for the first time: already the standard has been twice altered in twenty-five years, and there remains only a choice of difficulties and of evils,—the adoption of a course, not devoid of injustice, but calculated on the balance to produce the least possible. The creditors prior to 1797 must be a

1821 to the present time, the standard has not been depreciated; but, on the contrary, by the exclusion of silver, has actually been raised beyond its legal value prior to 1793. With sincere deference, however, to the high authority of Mr. Mushet, I suspect that a fallacy pervades his whole argument: he treats the account, out-standing for twenty years between Fund Holder and Tax Payer, as a debtor and creditor account between two unchanging corporate bodies; whereas it is an account between individuals, changing repeatedly; the debtor of to-day becoming the creditor to-morrow, and the equity of each transaction naturally varying with the date of the contract. It would hardly be reasonable to apply the same principles of equity to an account between the buyers and sellers of annuities at the late Office of Messrs. Howard and Gibbs, which would govern most justly the balance of a long account between the Bank of England and the East India Company.

small body indeed, compared with those who have contracted debt within the subsequent period.

The same answer applies also to the fundholder; excepting always that peculiar difficulty of the person now holding the annuity, not being the original lender, but the purchaser, if not at the full value, at least in a currency not depreciated in the extreme: but here the number of creditors is known to be small, the whole body of fundholders scarcely exceeding 280,000 persons*; and the number of debtors is the entire community, composed of all who contribute a portion of a single tax to the interest of the debt.

Nor will the argument avail any thing, that the Legislature never recognised the difference of value between paper and coin; for, in the same year when Mr. Vansittart's resolution was carried (a resolution, as stated by Mr. Brougham, which every man who could count ten on his fingers knew to be false), Parliament even declared its knowledge of the falsehood by passing an Act for the

* From a Paper ordered to be printed by the House of Commons, on the 12th of April, 1823, it appears that, at that date, the total number of persons receiving half-yearly dividends, was 288,473; of whom 277,594 were in receipt of various incomes from the funds, *all below* £.400 per annum; and only 10,879 of incomes above that sum. The number of persons receiving from £.1000 to £.2000 per annum, was 490; and those receiving *more* than £.2000 per annum, were *only* 218.

punishment of those who should sell a guinea for *more*, or pay a bank note for *less*, than its denominative amount. We cannot want a more direct acknowledgment of depreciation in public opinion.

Then again, it is observed, "that the condition "of this country must be strange indeed, if it can "only prosper by a violation of national faith," "and a subversion of private property; measures "which are reprobated by all statesmen and all "historians." Now, the testimony of all historians establishes the fact, that this is the certain end of heavy national debts; and that at last it becomes even the first duty of statesmen, when a nation labours for its existence under the load of its incumbrances, to lighten the vessel, and to cut away the broken mast of credit. Public extravagance is the abuse of which we complain; we exceeded our natural strength in the late war; languor and depression are the necessary consequences; we forestalled our income, we mortgaged our resources; and it cannot be a matter of surprise that it is now difficult to raise within the year, a revenue sufficient for the maintenance of our national honour. Mr. Hume*, in his Essay on Credit, points out the remedy, and recommends the precise measure which I have dared to propose. He says, that under such circumstances of heavy debt, "the revenue must be

* Hume on Public Credit, Essay ix. p. 379.

"raised from a continued taxation of the annui-
"tant, or, what is the same thing, from mort-
"gaging anew a certain part of their annuities,
"and thus making them contribute to their own
"defence, and to that of the nation."

The argument, also, that our national credit would be destroyed by a direct tax on the annuitant, and that, in case of a great state emergency, we could never borrow again, is decidedly at variance, both with fact, and with reason.

Austria depreciated her currency 400 per cent., acknowledged the depreciation, by law compelled her paper to pass 400 per cent. below its nominal value, and still to this hour she has no difficulty in borrowing, even in England: and Mr. Hume, in the same Essay, assigns the true reason, when he says, that the fear of an everlasting destruction of credit is an endless bug-bear; for a prudent man, in reality, would rather lend to the public immediately *after* we had taken a sponge to our debts, than before; as much as an opulent knave, even though one could not force him to pay, is a preferable debtor to an honest bankrupt: the former, in order to carry on business, may find it his interest to discharge his debts, when they are not exorbitant; the latter has it not in his power.

It will be urged, that the admission of expediency, in direct violation of Parliamentary engagements, is immoral and impolitic; since with

States, as with individuals, the "*honestum*," and not the "*utile*," should be the strict rule of conduct. But are not the Land Owners in actual possession of a monopoly firmly secured by an existing Act of Parliament? General expediency is the reason assigned for its abrogation; and if they are to give way, and to sacrifice their interests to this overpowering necessity, surely they are justified in compelling the creditor to admit his own rule in his own case, and to modify his claim according to expediency. The public creditor relies on Parliamentary security; the private creditor founds his claim on equity or law; but the Land Owner has a superior title: he possesses the sanction of Parliament, and equity is also on his side. Low rents and high taxes must ruin him; he holds, at this moment, the vantage ground; Parliament stands pledged to his monopoly; and he would be insane, indeed, to abandon it without a fixed and complete compensation.

I have shown the terms on which, in my humble judgment, it would be wise to capitulate; I have proved both the policy and general equity of these terms, and the power possessed by the Land Owners to obtain them; but, to be successful, the nobility and gentry must act in the strictest union; they will be opposed by the monied interest, as by one man; they will be opposed by the present Ministers, few of whom are connected with land, or

with the aristocracy,—some of whom, by far the most able, having risen, by their talents, from an humble origin, are disposed, very naturally, to envy the existence of any power in this country which genius cannot win, and which birth alone bestows. The Land Owners will be strenuously opposed, but they will be powerfully supported; they will be supported by every payer of tax throughout the kingdom,—by the peasant and the artisan,—by the merchant and by the manufacturer. Then, indeed, they will fight on the right ground; they will be backed by the great body of the people. Interests will be reunited, which ought never to have been severed; a nation will be arrayed against an administration; millions against thousands; and the issue of the contest will not long be doubtful.

The annuitant will suffer, indeed, but to a very small extent; and by timely concession he may avert a far greater calamity; for if he stand on the extreme of his right, and the Land Owner adhere to his Corn Law and his monopoly, the burthen of taxation can no longer be endured; civil discord and insurrection will be the result; and, though the owners perhaps may change, yet the land must remain, when the debt shall have been swept away, and become a by-word among nations.

With an apology for the length into which I have been drawn, I will conclude, in the

emphatic words of Mr. Hume. When contemplating, in the middle of the last century, the annihilation of the debt, "The event," he says, "is calamitous, but not the *most* calami-
"tous; thousands are thereby sacrificed to the
"safety of millions; but the contrary event
"might have taken place, and millions have been
"sacrificed to the temporary safety of thousands.
"Though the House of Lords be altogether com-
"posed of the proprietors of land, and the House
"of Commons chiefly; and, consequently, neither
"of them can be supposed to have great property
"in the funds, yet the connection of the Members
"may be so great with the proprietors, as to
"render them more tenacious of public faith,
"than prudence, policy, or even justice, strictly
"speaking, require. The dignity and authority
"of the landed gentry and nobility is much better
"rooted than the prosperity of the public credi-
"tor; and would render the contention very
"unequal, if ever we come to that extremity.
"One would incline to assign to this event a very
"near period, such *as half a century*, but I
"shall not assign any precise date; I shall con-
"tent myself with pointing out the event in
"general."

FINIS.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

A LETTER

TO THE

ELECTORS OF BRIDGENORTH,

UPON THE

CORN LAWS.

BY

W. W. WHITMORE, Esq. M. P.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH: AND
T. CADELL, STRAND, LONDON.
M.DCCC.XXVI.

A LETTER

UPON THE

CORN LAWS.

TO THE

ELECTORS OF BRIDGENORTH.

GENTLEMEN,

UPON public as well as private grounds, I am anxious to address you respecting the present state of the corn laws.—Upon public grounds, because I am well aware how much apprehension exists in the minds of the agriculturists upon this subject, and how necessary it is to allay the fears and satisfy the judgment of this most important class of the community, previous to such alterations being effected in those laws as shall make them square better

with the present policy and the essential interests of this country. The subject has been so frequently discussed, and the leading arguments so repeatedly stated, that I cannot hope to introduce much of novelty in my present consideration of it. All I propose to myself is, simply to bring again under your notice the leading topics of the discussion, with some facts and calculations which, though they possess not, perhaps, the merit of novelty, have not been sufficiently enforced, and the repetition of which will, in my opinion, be productive of advantage. In all great questions of internal policy, and more especially in those affecting the pecuniary interests of individuals, it is curious to remark how soon arguments are forgotten, and how easily the human mind abandons its judgment to listen only to its feelings and apprehensions of injury. That such is the case with respect to this great question, every one who mixes with the agricultural interest, must be well aware. A few common place cries against political economy,—of the wisdom of our ancestors,—the danger of innovation,—and the great importance of the agricultural interest to the state,—are the changes perpetually rung upon this question, and are generally sufficient

to close the judgment against any further argument upon it! Most assuredly I do not mean to undervalue these considerations; I do not close my eyes to the danger and inconvenience of changes in our internal policy; I am far from being an advocate for change, merely because a theory requires it, or because some possible advantage may accrue from it, but of which we have no certainty from experience; neither can I, as one of the landed interest, be supposed indifferent to the welfare of the agriculturists. If I have laboured with some degree of assiduity in this cause, it is because I am convinced of the necessity of the change; it is because the interests of agriculture as well as all other interests, in my judgment, require it; it is because our present law does not agree with, but totally differs from the ancient policy of this country; it is because experience has demonstrated the advantage of a more free intercourse with foreign countries, with respect to agricultural produce; it is because a re-establishment of this branch of commerce is absolutely essential to enable Great Britain to continue to hold the prominent station she now occupies amongst the manufacturing and commercial nations of the world. I will proceed as concisely as the nature of the subject will

admit to establish these positions. Before I do so, however, permit me to say a word upon the private motives to which I have alluded as urging me to this course. I am well aware how much of odium I have incurred amongst the agriculturists, by the line of policy I have felt it my duty to pursue, and I have had recent proofs of its amount. Contrary to former precedent in this neighbourhood, I have seen the agricultural interest exerting themselves strongly in favour of a stranger, in opposition to one of their own body, a neighbour in point of residence, and a friend in inclination. Far be it from me to complain of this. You, Gentlemen, are at perfect liberty to act as you please; to speak of your independence were almost an insult to you, it were to suggest a doubt of that which is clear, palpable, unquestionable. If you were of opinion that I harboured a hostile feeling to your interests, or that I was mistaken in my views respecting it, you were bound, in my opinion, to act as you did upon the occasion to which I allude. But suspecting, as I am induced to do, that this feeling has arisen from an erroneous view, as well of my intention as of the policy I have thought it my duty to recommend; it is not unnatural that I should wish, and will not, I hope, be considered objec-

tionable by you that I should endeavour to set myself right in your opinion. Placed too, by the result, in the distinguished situation of your representative, it is accordant with my own feelings, and not inconsistent with sound constitutional usage, that I should explain to you the motives which have led me to pursue the course I have done on this question. I am of opinion that the intercourse between the constituent body and the representative should be frequent, and without disguise—that while the latter is unshackled in his opinions, he should clearly explain his views on all questions of vital importance. This will, I hope, sufficiently account for my present step, and induce you to lend a patient attention to the statement I am about to make to you upon the vital question of the corn laws.

In order clearly to understand the question, and its bearing upon the interest of the country, it is necessary to keep in view the situation in which a country, at different stages of its progress, finds itself placed, with respect to agricultural produce. At one period it exports, at another it imports corn; such, at least, is the course which nature dictates, and which prevails where injudicious laws do not interfere to derange this natural and most beneficial

branch of commerce. The reason why a nation finds it most advantageous to do this is that at one period its population is small in proportion to the quantity of fertile soil it possesses, and that this soil yields a larger produce than can be consumed at home. The expense of cultivating land of higher degrees of fertility is trifling, and it can, therefore, be afforded at a price so low as to induce foreigners to purchase it notwithstanding the increase of cost generated by the conveyance of so bulky an article to any considerable distance. It is paid for generally in manufactured produce. A nation becomes an importer of corn, when its population has so increased as to consume not only the produce of its better soil, but that of some of inferior quality; the expenses of cultivation are thereby increased, the price is raised, and an importation of foreign corn, grown at a cheap rate, becomes a profitable business. The former was the situation of Great Britain up to the middle of the last century; its exports exceeded its imports of corn; but about the year 1773 it gradually became an importing country, and would have still continued constantly increasing its imports, had not laws been passed, in latter times at least, which impeded its progress in this respect. The advan-

tages which accrue from this intercourse with foreign states are, that a regular supply of food is obtained; that the fluctuations of seasons are much less felt, than where a nation is dependent upon a limited territory for its supply; that the price of labour, by which the beneficial employment of capital is regulated, is kept more nearly on a par with that of foreign countries; that a trade advantageous to both parties is carried on, each parting with its surplus produce to the furtherance of their mutual interests; and that kindly feelings, and what may be termed natural alliances, are formed between foreign and independent states redounding to the benefit of each. Where the intercourse is interrupted by law, the reverse of this takes place; the supply is rendered precarious; the fluctuations of seasons are felt with accumulated pressure; the price of labour is interfered with—raised at home and depressed abroad; trade is checked; and feelings of hostility take place, leading to such retaliatory laws as still further tend to derange its operation, while no reliance can be placed on the assistance, so valuable in times of war, and which may naturally be expected between foreign nations, where a beneficial commercial intercourse is carried on.

This is not theory only, but abundantly esta-

blished by the experience of the last fifty years in this country. I have already stated, that our present system of corn laws is not an adherence to an ancient scheme of policy, but a flagrant deviation from it. A cursory view of the former law will establish this position. The principle of the law regulating the import of corn which continued in force from the year 1773 to 1815 was as follows: there was one high duty of 24s. 3d. per quarter, and two low duties, one of 2s. 6d. and the other of a 6d. per quarter. These were payable by that law in the following ratio: the high duty while the price at home was under 44s. per quarter, the first low duty from 44s. to 48s. and the second low duty when it had reached 48s. This law continued in force until 1791, when the duties remaining the same, the rate at which they came into force was changed, substituting 50s. for 44s., and 54s. for 48s. Wheat, therefore, would be imported on the payment of 2s. 6d. per quarter, when its price had reached 50s. and at 6s. when it rose to 54s. In 1804, these prices were again raised to 60s. and 63s. This law, it appears, never prevented an import of wheat into Great Britain, except, perhaps, for three or four years in the earlier part of the period alluded to. The price always rose up

to that at which the low duties were payable, and virtually gave us a free trade in corn, subject to a duty of 2s. 6d. per quarter at most, and generally of only 6d. It is thus clear, that the present system, which consists of prohibition to import foreign corn, except at prices rarely obtained, and which may, in truth, be considered as those of scarcity, is an innovation upon the former system of our corn law. It remains to be seen how far this innovation is or is not a beneficial one. But, first let us pause, and consider whether there ever was a period in the history of this or any other country exhibiting a greater degree of prosperity than Great Britain enjoyed during the forty-two years I have mentioned. When has capital so increased? when have manufactures so multiplied? when has a revenue, and a revenue too, paid with equal ease to the people, been so augmented? when have works of art, roads, bridges, canals, harbours, been constructed with equal facility? when has military glory and political ascendency been carried to so high a pitch? and when, and this is perhaps the main point in the present inquiry, when has agriculture flourished to a similar extent?—Look at the wastes inclosed, at the draining effected—consider the vast improvements which have

taken place in husbandry, and calculate the prodigious augmentation of rents, and then say whether or not this was a period of great and general national prosperity. I wish not to carry my argument too far, and I will admit that an impediment to import corn arose in the later years of the late war, from its extent and its peculiar features. I will admit that this, and the variations of the currency will explain, in some measure, the high price of agricultural produce, and the consequent high rents: but, making every deduction on these heads, I am clearly of opinion that the period I have named was one of great agricultural prosperity, and this prosperity was in no measure owing to the laws respecting the admission of foreign corn: it sprung from that source, from whence alone real agricultural prosperity can spring, namely, the healthy and prosperous state of the other interests of the country,—from increasing capital and augmenting population. But it is time to consider the effects of the present law. The principle of the law passed in 1815 was, that all intercourse with foreign countries in grain should cease, unless the prices rose so high as to evince the necessity of foreign supply; that the trade in corn should not be, as it had been

heretofore, the rule, but the exception; that the home demand should, except in extraordinary cases, be supplied by the home produce. Now, this it had been found could only be accomplished by the existence of high prices; and, notwithstanding the parade of patriotism then put forth by the advocates of this system, it was obvious that high prices and high rents were the objects sought to be obtained by this law. Never, perhaps, in an enlightened country, was an order of things established more at variance with common sense and sound policy than the one introduced by this law. It established a monopoly, but failed in producing that essential ingredient of all monopolies, a limitation of quantity of the article monopolized; an omission which would be utterly destructive of any monopoly, but which, as I shall endeavour to show, was pre-eminently absurd and vicious in the commerce of grain. Practical men will surely allow the necessity of such limitation. The object of monopoly is to raise the price of a given article beyond the rate at which it would be sold without it. Price, however, is regulated by the demand and the supply. It is obvious that, in order to realize your object, you must not allow the supply to exceed the demand; if you do, no

law you can pass will be effectual for its accomplishment. Prices must fall; and it has been proved, that a very trifling excess of the supply over the demand will effect it. I say practical men cannot but accede to the truth of this obvious proposition, and it is always acted upon. The Dutch merchants destroyed a portion of the spices grown in the Eastern Archipelago, in order to secure to themselves the advantage of the monopoly they possessed in this article. The fishmongers of London have often pursued the same course. At the period of agricultural distress in 1821 or 1822, a proposition was made at one of the county meetings held generally at that period, to destroy, in some way or other, a portion of the surplus produce then in the farmers' hands. I have no recollection how this was proposed to be accomplished, and I cannot be supposed an advocate for so singular a proceeding; but I have no hesitation in saying, that if it had been possible, it was a more sensible proposition than those commonly adopted at such meetings—more sensible, at least, if the monopoly system was to be preserved. If I were an advocate for its continuance, I should be most anxious to see a burning clause added to the law, that should consign to the flames

the excess, when the supply exceeded the demand, because in that way only can I see the possibility of the object being attained. The distress of the period I have alluded to was, if not produced, fearfully aggravated by the system established by that law; and if it be allowed to continue in existence, it is, I think, obvious, we shall again, at no distant period, be exposed to a similar calamity. The state doctors have in truth thrown their patient, the agriculturist, into a state much resembling an ague, subject to hot and cold fits, and, in mockery, they miscall it protection;—a fatal misnomer, which, carrying with it, as it does, the force of an argument, has done more mischief to the world than any other single word ever used. Protection forsooth! can that be protection which strips the industrious farmer of his hard-earned capital? can that be protection which exposes the mass of the people to famine? can that be a beneficial system which deranges the trade of the whole world, and exposes to hazard the wealth, the power, the importance in the scale of nations of this, with all its faults, the most virtuous and the most blessed of any country in existence? But I have said this abortive attempt at monopoly is more injurious in the corn trade than in any other,

It is so, because corn is itself in a great measure the regulator of its own cost; a high price of corn leads to high rents, high tythes, high rate of labour, high poor rates; it demands more capital to stock a farm. All the various charges incurred by the farmer are, as all farmers know, augmented by the price of corn continuing high for a period of two or three consecutive years. This extra-expense has been incurred previous to the fall in price occurring consequent upon an abundant harvest; it cannot be checked at once, and even if it could, there is nothing wherewith to indemnify the farmer for the money already expended in producing his crops. He calculated upon a continuance of high price; his agreements of various kinds were contingent upon it—they are binding upon him, though the data upon which he entered into them are totally changed. The consequence of which is, that one season of agricultural distress sweeps off numbers of the poorer farmers, and that if it continue beyond that period, as it most commonly does when it once begins, the whole farming body feel it most severely. It cannot be too often repeated that great fluctuations in price are injurious to no interest more than to the agricultural. 'A monopoly in any other article, if it fail, is pro-

ductive of injury to the persons engaged in its production; but they have the power of control; they can cease to produce until the excess is worked off; nor does the high or low price of the produce affect, as in the case of the farmer, the price of labour and the other charges incident to such production. If a manufacturer of cloth or hats possess a monopoly of any given markets, and that, owing either to competition or false calculation, the market is overstocked, all he has to do is to limit his manufacture until the excess is worked off, and prices have attained their former level. But the farmer cannot do this, or at least he cannot do it with any thing like the same facility; his produce depends upon seasons, over which he has no control; his capital must be employed; it consists in part of live stock, which must be fed whether they tend to further production or not. He has engagements to meet, which necessitate a produce, however low it may be sold, and the first effect of a change from low to high price, is a greater and not a lessened growth of grain. It is in this way the poor farmer tries to meet his engagements, he finds himself on the brink of ruin, he disregards the common maxims of prudence, and he breaks through all his cove-

nants, to save himself and his family from being precipitated from the respectable station of an English farmer into the class below him, if not into the abject condition of a pauper. And I shall be charged perhaps with attributing all fluctuations in price to the law, overlooking those which arise from natural causes. I am far from doing so,—it is because the farming business is exposed more than any other to these natural fluctuations, that I especially complain of those factitious ones introduced by the law. Almost all great evils which afflict particular interests in a state, spring from a complication of causes,—erroneous legislation, then only produces its full effect, when it acts in conjunction with some of the various changes to which the affairs of men are exposed; as in the human body the sufferings are the most acute, and the danger the greatest, when natural weakness has been increased by accident, or exasperated by injudicious treatment. And, in the case before us, it is the height of folly to aggravate by law the fluctuations to which the agricultural interest is, under all circumstances, exposed. There is, too, this distinction to be drawn between the two cases, —fluctuations in price arising from natural causes,—carry with them a certain principle of compensation, if, in a natural state of things,

prices fall on account of abundance, there may be distress amongst the farmers, but there is the additional quantity of produce in his hands to mitigate the evil. This fall, too, is from a less height, but if you have by law screwed up prices to an unnatural elevation, and they suddenly fall, it is clear you aggravate the evil in a tenfold ratio. He may have, as in the former case, the additional produce; but the compensation for the greater fall will be sought for in vain by this advantage. The fall of price from 80s. per quarter to 40s. is a very different thing from the fall from 60s. to 40s., and the difference constitutes often the rise of the former. Besides, this fluctuation of price may arise without there being an abundant produce; suppose speculation, founded upon erroneous data, to have raised prices to the import price, it is clear, that the warehouses would be emptied of all their foreign grain, and that large imports would take place, and the larger because the time is limited by law for its admission, unless the high price continues—what would be the result? A great fall in price, without any compensation to the farmer for increased produce. An error, or a fraud in taking the averages by which the import price is fixed, might produce

a similar result. It is proper to mention, that the law passed in 1815 has already been changed to a certain extent. It has fixed 70s. instead of 80s. as the import price, but it has added high duties which did not exist before; and when the actual state of the currency, compared with that of 1815, is taken into account, the present can hardly be considered a more favourable law to the country than that of 1815. The principle of excluding foreign corn, except in seasons of scarcity, still remains unchanged. If such then be the consequences of the low fit of the ague to the agriculturists, what are those of the high fit periods?—I mean of high price. No doubt, the landlord and clergy are benefitted by it; and great, if this state were permanent, I admit, would be the benefit to them; but do the other classes constituting the agricultural interest, participate in it? This is much more questionable. How stands the case with respect to the farmer at rack rent? During the period of the rise he is benefitted, but no sooner has it taken place, than all his charges, as I have before stated, rise in exact proportion to the elevation which prices have attained. It is a flagrant error to imagine that his net profits are at all greater under a high, than under a low price; indeed, if the sub-

ject were accurately investigated, I am convinced the very reverse would be found to be the fact. A permanent rise in the price of food leads, as a necessary consequence, to a rise in that of labour and a diminution of profits, in which the farmer, as a capitalist, participates. But this is rather an abstruse point; and as my wish is to consider this subject at present plainly and practically, I will not pursue it. The interest, too, of the landlord is contingent upon the permanency of the high price; and if it be true that this system subjects the country to great fluctuation of price, the question assumes a very different shape. Whether I understand my own interest or not I will not decide; but, as a landed proprietor, I hesitate not to affirm that it is not advanced by high prices, when, with those high prices, a principle of fluctuation is also introduced. High price gives me higher rent it is true, but then I have to pay dearer for nearly every article of my consumption; and I pay away with one hand a considerable portion of what I received with the other. This is an important consideration. The balance of advantage is thus far, however, I own, on the side of the landlord; but then comes a period of agricultural distress, arising from a considerable fall of

prices. What is the result? Why, great arrears, great abatements, considerable deterioration of property, and those embarrassments which arise from an anticipation of income to meet engagements already contracted. Perhaps there is nothing more injurious to an individual than the being led to calculate upon a larger income than he actually receives; it almost invariably gives rise to great pecuniary embarrassment, and this is the consequence of prices high generally, though liable to great variations. The clergy are in some respects placed in a similar condition to the landlord; but with this essential difference, that they feel not, in any thing like the same degree, the consequences of the deterioration of land contingent upon periods of agricultural distress. Buildings, gates, hedges, as we well know, suffer at such times from neglect, and these fall entirely upon the landlord.

There is another point, too, in which the interest of these classes is like that of the rest of the community, seriously affected by the system pursued with respect to corn, and that is, its effect upon the burden of taxation. I mean not the amount of revenue collected, but the pressure with which it falls upon individuals; that pressure is certainly dependent

upon the wealth of the people, in other words, upon the amount of capital a nation possesses. Ireland, with a population of six or seven millions, groans under a taxation of three or four millions; Great Britain, with a population of at most, fourteen millions, pays, without difficulty, fifty millions. Why is this? Because Ireland is miserably poor, and Great Britain very rich. Supposing it necessary to keep up the same amount of revenue, how can the pressure be lightened to the tax payer? Clearly in no other way than by augmenting the wealth of the community, by increasing the national capital; in proportion as you do this, in the same proportion do you alleviate the burden of taxation, each branch of the revenue yields more; taxation, therefore, may be reduced without the smallest diminution of the national revenue. That this increase of means wherewith to meet taxation would be produced by a low price of grain rather than a high one, will be evident from the following considerations. A high price of grain benefits, as I have shown, the landlord and clergy alone; all other classes suffer from it, because it is from the pocket of the consumers that this increase of high price proceeds. Foreigners, of course, contribute not to it. Neither the Dutch nor the Spaniards

will buy dear corn in England, when they can get cheap corn from the Baltic or America; and as it is abundantly clear that there must be a source from whence this high price proceeds, it is no less clear, it must come out of the pockets of individuals residing in the country where it prevails. Now, if this were a mere transfer of wealth from the pockets of one class to that of the other, it is probable the revenue would not be affected by it. The manufacturer and artisan would contribute less to it, while the landlord and clergy would contribute so much more as to make up the difference; but the misfortune is, it is not a mere transfer, but a most bungling mode of taxation, by which, perhaps, not one-third of the sum taken from the contributors is paid into the hands of the receivers. A permanent rise in the price of wheat of 10s. per quarter, communicating, as it would do, a corresponding rise to all other articles of agricultural produce, is a tax upon the community of little short of fifteen millions annually; and I believe I overstate the benefit to the landed interest, when I assume that it puts five millions into their pockets. The remainder is lost in the seed sown, the food given to animals, and the extra prices of labour.

This view of the subject is, I am aware, at direct variance with one of the popular arguments of the agriculturists. They insist upon the necessity of high prices on account of high taxation. The national debt is constantly their theme, as a justification of the corn laws, when the impolicy of the system is demonstrated; but surely they can hardly have considered the rationale of their own argument. All general taxation must be borne by the nation at large; no individual can escape from it; it mingles, in some form or other, with the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and almost the air we breathe, in its various direct and indirect shapes. Some of our imposts are, it is true, local and partial; but the remainder of our taxation—the great bulk of it—can never be fairly pleaded as a reason for protection to any one interest, because borne by all.

But there are other considerations to be taken into account; a monopoly in corn leads to monopolies in other articles; it is the plea always used in favour of restrictions upon commerce, and it is commonly urged successfully. When the majority of the legislators are monopolists they cannot but look with a favourable eye on the monopoly system; every increase of that leads to an accession of allies

to their darling portion of it; indeed, they who maintain restrictions upon one branch of commerce to be a national benefit, can hardly, with any semblance of consistency, deny that it is equally beneficial when applied to other objects. Crime begets crime; no less surely does monopoly create monopoly. Monopoly, I again repeat, derives its advantage solely from the nation wherein it exists;* to be of any value it must rob Peter to pay Paul; and both Peter and Paul reside in the same country. Here, again, it is not a simple transfer; the common effect of monopoly is to deaden exertion, not to stimulate to greater effort. Peter is robbed, not that Paul may be more rich, but more idle; or that he may waste his strength in producing that which might be purchased much better and cheaper from some one else. Thus it is that all monopolies diminish national wealth; but they also produce a more permanent effect, by retarding the accumulation of capital, and it is in that accumulation that national wealth consists. None produce this effect more than

* The exceptions to this doctrine are few in number, consisting chiefly of products which, like certain wines, are in high request, and can be grown only in particular situations. I am not aware that any of the products of Great Britain come within this exception.

the monopoly in corn; it raises the price of labour and diminishes profits from whence such accumulation proceeds. But neither is this all the evil; if profits are reduced at home by a high price of corn, in vain will you attempt to prevent capital seeking for itself a more beneficial employment elsewhere. The difficulty of transferring it from one part of the world to another is not great, and private interest is too sharp-sighted to be long blind to its own advantage. This is a fearful consideration. The wealth, the power, the credit of the country, are all at issue in such a case; and to no interest is this of such momentous import as to the agriculturist. Land has no wings, as riches have, wherewith to fly to other regions; it must remain and await whatever of weal or of woe betides the nation. The possibility, too, of preserving high prices is clearly contingent upon the possession of capital employing a large population; thence proceeds the demand, and without the demand we know well price cannot be raised. It were an act little short of insanity to run any risk upon this subject. Neither is it a simple but a compound inducement we hold out to capitalists to seek employment elsewhere; in proportion as our price is raised by the exclu-

sion of foreign corn, we diminish its cost to foreigners. Great Britain is in this, as in all other things relating to commerce, the grand regulator of the world; if her markets are open to foreign corn, its price is generally raised; if closed, it falls as generally; and that is, in a great measure, the secret of the very low prices abroad, at which the agricultural interest is so much alarmed. What is the result of this? Why, that foreign manufactures are established in competition with our own, that ships are built by foreigners, and manned and victualled by foreigners, to the exclusion of those of British build. The ship-owners complain loudly of this; they, as usual, cry but against theories, against innovation. They invoke the spirit of the old navigation laws, and conceive that to the changes which have taken place in them their distress is to be attributed; changes positively forced upon us, and without which we should have exposed our commercial marine to infinitely greater hazard,—but they omit to remark, that, with such a system of corn laws as ours, their interest must be one of the first to suffer. The trade of the ship-builder derives little or no benefit from machinery, which counteracts for a time the effect of cheap labour, all with them is manual labour and

food. Let us take warning by the effect we have produced in this interest; deservedly one of the most cherished by Englishmen, because ministering to our most constitutional and most efficient act of power. Other interests will soon suffer equally,—with English capital and English skill, English machinery can soon be erected in the United States of America, or Germany, or Poland, and then, when perhaps it is too late, we shall awake from our fit of obstinate blindness and torpor, but awake only to contemplate the peril of our situation, and the advantages we have so wantonly thrown away.

But the agriculturalists assert that this fluctuation and anticipated high range of price is all imaginary; very good in theory, but disproved by practice; and they quote the aggregate average of the last three years as a proof of this assertion. True it is, that such an average for the years 1823, 24, and 25, amounts to 59s 7d.; and that no very great fluctuation of price appears to have taken place during that period; nothing more at least than might be accounted for by natural causes. Did the case rest there, I admit it would be a strong one; but a little consideration will, I think, shew how superficial is such a view, and how inadequate as a defence of the present laws.—In the

first place, when we examine the period, thus, for the sake of argument brought forward, we shall find that a much greater degree of fluctuation has prevailed within it, than an average so struck would at first sight lead us to imagine. The price of wheat in the quarter ending 15th February 1823, was 40s. 7d.; it gradually rose during that and the following year, until on the 15th May 1825, it had reached the point of 67s. 11d.; since that period it has been on the decline; and the average of the last three or four months will range somewhere between 55s. and 57s.

But that which, in my opinion, completely defeats the argument I am combating, is, that it is not owing to the existence of the law, and a confidence in its continuance, that this state of things is to be attributed, but to the very reverse of these; to its infraction, and to a growing conviction on the minds of all persons, whose opinion and operation in the market regulate prices, that the time was not distant when the law now in force would be repealed, or essentially altered. With respect to the infraction of the law, I need only appeal to the acts of the two last Sessions of Parliament; as a proof of this, these acts were passed with a view of preventing the full effects of the law being felt; and admitted, as every one knows,

the corn in bond at the time of the passing the act, as well as the grain the produce of Canada, into the English markets. One of the objects too of the last act, was to empower Ministers to admit a large quantity of foreign corn into home consumption, amounting to 500,000 quarters, if circumstances should occur to render this desirable. It is evident these are all decided infractions of the law, and it really is idle to talk of a law producing a given effect, when that effect may be traced much more to its infraction than to its observance. Neither were the quantities thus admitted into our markets inconsiderable. The wheat admitted in 1825, including that from Canada, amounted to 497 quarters, and the wheat flour to upwards of 100,000 cwts. This year it has amounted, including flour, to, I believe, nearly 300,000 quarters. There has consequently been admitted into the English markets in each of the years 1825 and 1826, an average of about 400,000 quarters; now this, as I shall show shortly, is not much below the average import of any given number of years when the trade was unshackled. But there is a consideration of still more potency bearing upon this part of the subject, and that is, the effect of opinion upon the state of the

market. It is obvious to any one who pays even a slight attention to matters of this nature, that the demand and supply which are said to regulate prices, are not to be taken with reference only to the consumption of the day, week, or month, in which they prevail, but naturally embrace a much larger period. One, and not unfrequently two or more years' consumption, enter into the calculations of those whose business it is to aid in the distribution of commodities by interposing between the producer and the consumer of any given article. They increase or diminish their purchases according to their view of the future, as well as the immediate demand and supply; and where an accumulation by such means takes place, it forms an essential part of the stock in hand. The operations of this body obviously have an immense effect in regulating the prices of the article in which they deal. In the corn trade, they consist of merchants, corn factors, millers, and dealers of various descriptions. The intelligence of this class of persons is great; and their attention being directed to the distribution of food, great advantage results to producers as well as consumers, by the speculations into which they enter, tending to an equalization of price not

only throughout each year, but for periods of longer duration. Their stocks at one time alleviate the effects of dearth to the consumers, and their purchases at another relieve the farmer from a superabundance of produce for which otherwise there would be no demand.

Great, however, as is the intelligence of this class of persons, it is not quite so infallible as we are accustomed to reckon it. They, like other merchants, though generally right, are sometimes wrong in their calculations. Nor is this to be wondered at, when the vast variety of elements of consideration which their trade requires are fairly estimated. They are perhaps rather too apt to be incautious in a rising, and too slack in their purchases in a falling market, and this more especially after any of those periods of extraordinary fluctuation to which all commerce is occasionally exposed. Whenever the dealers in any article have sustained considerable loss, there is for some time a great reluctance again to embark their capital in what has so recently proved an unprofitable speculation. On the other hand, after unusual profits derived from the purchase of a commodity, the attention of individuals possessing capital is attracted to it, and large purchases are made, perhaps the larger on ac-

count of some of these individuals not possessing that extensive information and experience which such a business demands. The conviction of abundance and of scarcity, of which Mr. Malthus speaks, lasts some time after both abundance and scarcity have really ceased: that of abundance, however, the longer; because it commonly proves a period of loss to speculators, and because the suffering from loss operates more powerfully on the human mind than does the hope of profit. There is, too, another reason why, after the general failure of such speculations, a considerable time should elapse before they are again renewed. It is this: A considerable portion of the purchases of this description are carried on with borrowed capital—by advances from the country bankers—who naturally feel somewhat shy of advancing money to individuals whom they know to have lately sustained losses, and for the prosecution of a business which is generally thought to have been for some time productive of loss. The result is a considerable stagnation in the sale of the article in question.

Credit, so beneficial, nay, so essential to the well-being of a commercial country, is liable at times to run into extremes; more especially

where paper forms the chief amount of the currency. At one period it rises so high as to border upon rashness; at another it sinks so low as scarcely to appear to exist. Thus it is, that high stocks generally lead to low; and that those reverses to which the commercial world is subject produce such accumulated distress, and spread their effects over so long a period.

Let us apply this reasoning to the case before us—that of corn. Every one knows that the period of agricultural distress was one in which the speculators in grain, both of home and foreign growth, suffered severely. A simple reference to the gradual fall in prices for six years, commencing with 1817, will establish it. They were as follows.

1817	94.9	1820	65.10
1818	84.1	1821	54.3
1819	73.	1822	43.3

It is thus clear that the purchaser in one year, for consumption in the next, during the whole of that period was subject to great loss; and it is notorious that such was the despondency created in the minds of the corn dealers generally, that scarcely any one thought of laying up stocks, and transactions in this market were confined to the daily, or at most the week-

ly demand of the country; such too, I have every reason to believe, still continues to be the case. There have been during that period extravagant, nay, absurd speculations in all other articles; grain alone formed an exception. That it has done so, was not solely owing to the causes I have enumerated, but to them was superadded the different rate of price of British and Foreign grain produced by the corn laws: wheat in bond might be purchased for 3s. or 4s. per bushel, whereas British wheat of similar quality was selling at 7s. or 8s. It would require no ordinary degree of boldness to speculate largely in British corn with such a state of things notoriously existing: especially when the very effect of such speculation might be to raise prices so high as to let the bonded wheat into the market, as well as to open it for the reception of grain from all parts of the world. A week's rain at a critical period; a fraud, and even error in striking the averages, might also produce this effect. A feeling too, prevailed that the corn laws would not long continue, at least without considerable amendments—a feeling in some measure perhaps produced by the motions I felt it to be my duty to make, in respect to them in the House of Commons, but still further increased to a great extent, by the conduct the

government have pursued on this subject—conduct which, if I were not aware of the difficulties of their situation, amidst the conflict of interest affected by this question, I should be disposed to comment upon with some severity. Sure I am, that the admission on the part of government, that the law required alteration, and allowing two whole years to elapse without effecting it at so critical a period, would, without such a palliation, be considered both weak and injudicious, to a degree which, however characteristic it might be of former governments, is scarcely reconcilable with the intelligence and decision displayed on other occasions by the present administration. It certainly is not to be wondered at that, under such circumstances, the internal as well as the external trade in corn should have sustained a severe shock; and it will not be until after some time and experience of the effect of the new law, whatever it may be, and whenever it may be passed, that it will recover its former tone.

I have already stated the great advantages, both to the consumers and producers, arising from such a trade. To the absence of speculations, I attribute however, in this instance, that comparative steadiness of price, to which I have before adverted. It may at

first sight appear that this is inconsistent with my reasoning, that the absence of speculation, not its existence has been productive of benefit. But the very unnatural position in which we are placed by this law must ever be borne in mind, in discussing this subject. An extensive speculation in corn at any time during the last three years would, I feel convinced, have raised prices so high as to have opened the ports. That they have remained closed is, in my opinion, to be attributed to a gradual diminution of the stock in hand, combined with the admission of foreign corn, to which I have already alluded. This diminution could hardly have taken place to the extent it has done, had the internal corn trade been in its usual vigour. The possibility of working off stocks of wheat, and the continuing to do so for a considerable period, will be apparent from the following considerations: The usual stock in hand of old wheat, at harvest, may be fairly estimated as sufficient for three or four months' consumption. It will thus amount to three or four millions of quarters; and, even in the supposition of an annual deficiency of supply of 1500,000 quarters, it is obvious that a country might continue for some years with its usual consumption, before it became fully aware of the

deficiency that existed. This could only happen where the internal state of trade was paralyzed, and in those cases in which early and tolerably abundant harvests had existed. These are, however, the precise circumstances under which we have been placed during the period I have mentioned. The two last harvests have been remarkably early, and the grain, as is generally the case in such seasons, has come into immediate use; while the farmers have not been aware of this state of things, owing to the old wheat in the country being almost entirely in their hands. Their stock may perhaps not have been much lower than usual, though of that even I entertain great doubts; but the warehouses and stores of the dealers, which, at the close of the harvest year, generally hold so large a quantity, have been gradually emptying, and now scarcely contain any stock. That this is the case, any one who takes the trouble to inquire into the subject will easily discover; and it is further proved, by the falling off of the deliveries of grain in all the principal markets of the country. It appears from a return lying before me, that the deliveries into the port of London of quarters of wheat and sacks of flour, for the seven weeks before and after

Christmas, amounted, upon an average of six years ending 1824, to 273,057; whereas, the amount of a similar period in 1825 amounted only to 207,604. The arrivals in the port of Liverpool from 1st October to 1st March 1825, amounted to 162,754 quarters of British and Irish wheat; while, for a similar period ending in 1826, they only reached 79,329 quarters. The difference in that instance has been made up by the Canadian and foreign wheat admitted, without which, I am assured by the best informed merchants there, the consumption could not have been supplied.

Now, supposing speculation nearly to have ceased, and that the markets still continued supplied, there is no wonder that the prices should not have undergone any considerable variation. There is, too, one circumstance which, during the latter part of the last and the beginning of the present year, has operated strongly to keep down prices: I allude to the state of the money market. I entertain no doubt—supposing no fluctuations to have taken place in our monetary system, that the currency had been neither depressed nor raised in value, and that the consumption of the country had remained unchecked by the distress thereby introduced, and still unfortunately prevailing—

that prices would, notwithstanding the absence of speculation, have ranged very considerably higher than they now do. Before, therefore, a hasty opinion be formed of the benefit of steady prices, it becomes necessary to investigate all the causes which have given rise to them. Now, I hesitate not to say that there has been nothing beneficial in the state of things existing for the last four or five years: that they have gradually been laying the foundation for extreme misery, and which nothing but a speedy change of the law, combined with abundant seasons, can avert. By its operation, stocks at home have been worked off, while cultivation abroad has been fearfully repressed. Abundant seasons cannot always be reckoned upon; and if they fail us before this great error is remedied, what must be the results? Can any one doubt that scarcity, in its most frightful aspect, will awaken us from this dream of blind, unfounded security? The longer it is delayed the more alarming will be the consequences, because the causes will be laid so much the deeper; and it most usually happens in the political as in the natural world, that storms which have been long gathering burst forth with greater fury, and continue for a much longer

period than those which arise suddenly, and in the formation of which fewer elements have combined. The present year is pregnant with serious reflection in this respect; as yet, it is perhaps too early to speak with any thing like confidence of the result,—but as all the crops of grain, except wheat, have proved greatly deficient, and the winter keep is far from abundant, it is to be feared we are drawing on with accelerated pace, to a period of considerable difficulty. Wheat, fortunately, has proved a much better crop than either barley or oats, and is, I believe, considered a fair average; had this been otherwise, the most alarming consequences might, in the present state of the country, have been anticipated. But the future crop of wheat will probably suffer from the general failure of the young clovers; and there can, I think, hardly be a question in the mind of any one who calmly reflects upon the prospects of this country, that to delay an alteration of the corn law beyond the ensuing session of Parliament, would be the very height of inconsiderate rashness. How far the government feel the necessity of the case, or how far they are in a condition to cope with the prodigious influence of the landed aristocracy, time will show. The country, at all events,

ought to be alive to the merits of this great question, and watch narrowly the proceeding of the legislature upon it.

Having thus endeavoured to show the vast importance of this question, I will proceed to state my reasons for thinking that the landed interest attach far too much importance to the present law—that their fears are greatly exaggerated, respecting as well the quantity of wheat that could be furnished to us by foreign countries, as also the price at which it would be introduced into this country. If the object, indeed, were still to keep up prices to 70s. or 80s. per quarter, as was contemplated when the law was originally passed, I quite admit there would be grounds for alarm, in an alteration of it, as these prices are quite unattainable under any thing like a system of free trade with foreign countries in the articles of grain, and without such a trade constantly existing, the great evils of the law, as I have shown, cannot be averted. But fortunately these are not the prices which have recently prevailed; fortunately the views of the more rational of the agriculturists are now greatly moderated; fortunately, the experience of the last three years has shown, that agriculture can flourish under a very different average of price than that which,

for a time was asserted to be the sole condition of its continued prosperity. The average of the three years, ending Nov. 15, 1825, is, as I have already stated, something below 60s. per quarter, and not only has this not been a period of distress to the agricultural interest, but it is one which has enabled the farmer to recover some of his losses, or pay up some of his arrears, caused by the depression of prices between 1820, and the beginning of 1823. That rents have been reduced, and are not brought back to their former level, is probably in most cases true; still I am not aware that landlords have such reason to complain, except in so far as the distress of the antecedent period still weighed upon them, as it did certainly during the year 1823. The average of the last three months is lower than the one I have stated, being somewhere between 55s. and 57s. 6d. and although I will not take upon me to assert that no distress at present exists among the agriculturists, I hesitate not to say, it is not the price of wheat of which they have reason to complain, but the effects of the drought of last summer, by which the price of cattle has been greatly lowered, and the produce of spring corn much lessened, combined with the low price of wool, caused partly by the stagnation

of trade, and partly by the immense speculations in foreign wool last year. These causes of distress are clearly not attributable to an admission of foreign corn, but are, in some cases, greatly aggravated by the existing corn laws. They are aggravated by the distresses in the manufacturing districts, which, though not strictly proceeding from the corn laws, are unquestionably augmented by them. Had the trade in the important article of grain existed, there is reason to believe the accumulation of manufactured produce in the hands of the merchants would not have been so large as it now is, because foreigners would have possessed the means of taking so much off our hands, and credit could not have continued under such circumstances so long depressed; now it is manifest that the only compensation the farmer can receive for a produce, diminished by the effect of seasons, is in its advanced price; and price can only advance where the demand for it remains, if not unchecked, still considerable in proportion to the supply; and such a demand can alone arise from the body of the people being in a condition to purchase their usual quantity of food in all its various shapes. Meat and beer may be said to be their luxuries, because not absolutely essential to the susten-

tation of life; and they are consequently the articles of agricultural produce, the prices of which are the soonest and the longest affected by distresses existing among the manufacturing classes. If the people were fully employed, I feel but little doubt that the effects of the unusual season we have witnessed would have been far less felt by the agriculturists than they have been, or are likely to be; and, paradoxical as it may appear, it is far from improbable that the agricultural interest would derive great immediate benefit by an alteration of the corn laws; it would restore confidence, lead to a renewal of trade, and a consequent demand for that part of their produce now so much depressed in value, in proportion to the amount of its produce. The articles to which I allude, too, are amongst those in which the agriculturist of this country possesses an advantage which cannot be diminished by the freest system of trade in foreign corn. Neither meat nor the products of grass land, in their fresh, uncured state, can be imported from a distance. With barley too, of home growth, there is little competition; foreign barley will generally not pay for malting under our present duties and excise laws; and the consequence is, but little is imported; the annual

average import of foreign barley; from 1811 to 1821, after deducting exports, only amounted to 93,916 quarters. Then with respect to wool, there can be no doubt that a prohibition to the import of foreign corn, while wool is allowed to be brought in subject to the payment of a low duty, is offering a premium to the foreign agriculturist to convert his arable into pasture land, for the supply of the markets of Great Britain, and that the English wool-grower is consequently exposed to a competition far greater in amount than he would otherwise have to encounter; the same applies to tallow, to hides, and to flax.

These considerations greatly modify the advantage which the landed interest derive from the actual state of the law; and the more it is considered, the more imperfect, as a system, must it appear. The exclusion of wheat, and the admission to import wool and the other articles I have enumerated, at comparatively low duties, is one of those anomalies to which such a system is liable. It is clear that we must either alter the system altogether, or be prepared to carry it to a length of which no one but Mr. Webb Hall has ever yet dreamt. His system was to exclude all raw produce from foreign countries, down, if I remember right,

to pears and eggs; and however absurd it might sound, at least it had more of consistency than our present scheme of policy.

But let us now see what would be the probable result of admitting foreign grain at all times, subject to what are now considered moderate duties. We shall be much assisted in this inquiry, if we avail ourselves of the experience we have had under a system of import, free from the shackles of law; and such experience is afforded by the twenty-one years that elapsed from the commencement of the present century up to the year 1821. During that period, except for the interval of about a year from the passing of the corn law in 1815, to the opening of the ports, as it is called, in the autumn of 1816, there was no impediment, by law, to the import of foreign grain: there were, it is true, obstructions to this import, arising from the system of war then pursued, and the possession of the ports of the Baltic by the French troops; but this occurred only for a few years towards the close of the war, and it is counterbalanced by the circumstance of there having occurred five years of scarcity in England within the time I have mentioned, namely, the years 1800, 1801, 1810, 1817, and 1818, in which the imports from foreign parts were im-

mense. I conceive, therefore, that in striking an average of the whole of that period, we shall probably rather exceed than fall short in our estimate of the amount of foreign corn likely to be imported under a more free system of trade, and at periods when no extraordinary demand arises in this country from scarcity. The annual average of that period amounts to 598,000 qrs. of wheat. This, however, is the whole quantity imported, without deducting the exports, and rather more than half of it was imported during the years of scarcity to which I have alluded, the whole quantity imported being 12,577,029 qrs., and the imports of those five years amounting to 6,740,796 qrs. In these years the prices were very high, and the supplies were in consequence drawn from the most distant sources of supply. The imports and prices were as follows:

Years.	Quarters.	s.	d.
1800	1,264,520	113	7
1801	1,424,766	118	9
1810	1,439,614	106	2
1817	1,029,038	94	9
1818	1,562,878	84	1

The quantity of foreign barley imported for a similar period, gives an annual average of 81,346 qrs., and of oats, of 320,003. Now, ad-

mitting that the imports of wheat will amount in each year to about 600,000 quarters, which appears to me an ample estimate, I cannot see in it so much cause of alarm as some of the agriculturists entertain: the consumption of this country, including Ireland, and estimating the seed, can hardly be less than 13,000,000 of quarters annually,* and every year is adding to our population, and consequently increasing our consumption: an increase which a more free system of trade in corn would considerably accelerate. Then, with regard to price, I cannot believe that such a quantity, drawn as it must be from a considerable distance, could be exported into this country free of duty, but including the merchant's profit and other charges, under a price of 50s.; and in this supposition I am borne out by the estimate drawn up by Mr. Jacob, in his valuable report upon the present state of agriculture in Poland, from whence our chief supplies would be derived. The probable cost of a quarter of wheat imported into England from the maritime provinces of Prussia, he estimates at 43s.—but this allows no-

* I am inclined to believe, that in this estimate the probable import has been over-rated, and the consumption stated somewhat too low.

thing for the profit of the merchant importing it into this country, nor does this estimate cover the whole amount of the risk contingent upon such an import. The insurance provides against the loss of the ship, including its cargo, but makes no allowance for partial damage sustained by the latter. The wheat from Cracow, he estimates, might be sent to the port of London for 45s., and that from Warsaw would amount to 48s. per quarter. It is, however, to be borne in mind, that wheat of similar quality must bear the same price in the market, from whatever quarter it may proceed; and if it be true that a portion of the wheat derived from the Vistula, can only be imported into the port of London at a price of 48s.; that is the condition upon which alone the whole of its produce can be sent to us; if that price be not obtained, the quantity imported will be diminished. If the price be such as to bring the produce of land less fertile, or more remote in point of situation, into the market, it raises all other wheat of similar quality to its own value, yielding a larger profit to the possessor of that portion of the wheat which can be produced at less cost. The principles which regulate this import are the same as those which regulate the supplies derived from different soils or

different situations in our own country. Good soil, and good situations, are more valuable to the owner, not because their produce is sold cheaper, but because it is raised in value by the necessity of drawing a portion of the supplies from land less advantageously situated in these respects. The value of the produce of the former is thereby raised, while the amount of its produce continues unchanged. If, therefore, it be a condition of supply from the Vistula that a part of its produce should sell for 48s. in our markets, and that England, joined to the other importing countries in Europe, required the whole of its produce, as we should do if our ports were again open; the result must inevitably be, that all wheat of similar quality would bear that price in the London market. To this, however, is to be added the profit of the importing merchant, and the indemnification for the risk I have mentioned; which cannot, I believe, be estimated at less than 4s. or 5s. per quarter, making it 52s. or 53s. per quarter; and if to that be added a duty of 10s., the price to the consumer would be 62s. or 63s. per quarter. This is perhaps wheat of good quality; and the average being as it is from 5s. to 8s. below that of the best quality, would,

in such case, stand at about 55s. Now, this is nearly our present price; and, consequently, if these data are correct, an alteration of the corn laws, substituting a duty of 10s. for our present system, would lead to no such ruinous change in agriculture as the alarmists imagine. In my judgment, and it is an opinion not lightly formed, an average of 55s. is the utmost to which it would be either politic or just to attempt to raise the price of wheat in this country, and that being obtained, we are fully remunerated for the additional burdens thrown upon the land in this country. But it has been said these are uncertain data on which to legislate, and not borne out by the actual prices at which foreign corn is sold. Certainly not. But it is one of the worst effects produced by our present system of law, that it creates this great diversity of price in the English and foreign market; and there can be no doubt that the low price abroad is in great measure, if not entirely, to be attributed to the English corn laws. Great Britain ought to be, in its present situation, the largest importing country of agricultural produce in the whole world; and it follows as a necessary consequence, that if she suddenly adopts a system by which this trade is nearly annihilated,

a glut must ensue in the exporting countries. There is no longer a vent for their extra produce; and every one knows, under such circumstances, that price may be depressed to almost any degree, and that to form an estimate of it from such data would lead to most imperfect and erroneous conclusions. If it be objected, that this depression of price has lasted too long to be accounted for upon such principles, I answer, that with respect to agricultural pursuits, it is impossible, under a considerable period, to make an essential change in the accustomed mode of agriculture; the greater portion of the capital employed in agriculture is available for no other purpose; and changes of that nature, difficult under all circumstances, are infinitely more so in the case of countries purely agricultural, such as those from whence the major part of our supplies would be drawn. There are few other objects to which their attention can be directed, neither have they that abundance of capital, or those advantages by which change of employment is facilitated to richer countries. Hope too, still lingers and opposes any great change; it requires a long time to convince mankind, that a trade to which they have been long accustomed, is really annihilated; and in

the case of corn, they know full well, that one season of considerable deficiency commonly convinces mankind of the folly of all such attempts. I answer still farther, that, under the circumstances of the foreign demand in such country falling off, the price would permanently fall, and settle upon a lower level than formerly, still yielding a fair profit to the cultivator; it would do so, both because his attention would be directed to soils of superior fertility, and because there would not be that addition to cost which arises from distant carriage;—the produce, for instance, of the immediate neighbourhood of Dantzic would suffice for the consumption of Dantzic, and it would be wholly unnecessary to draw supplies down the whole course of the Vistula, as is the case when foreign demand, either exists, or is anticipated. Great, however, as are the impediments to such changes, there is no doubt that they have commenced upon a pretty large scale. Where any capital existed and the soil was not entirely worn out, pasture has been substituted for the cultivation of corn. Sheep and cattle, but particularly the former, have been increased to a considerable extent, and the grain formerly grown for export has been applied as their food during the winter. All the accounts from Po-

land agree in this statement; and the longer our system of corn laws continues, the more extensive will such a change necessarily become.

Another objection may be started with respect to the quantity of wheat likely to be imported into this country. On a partial view of the case, it may appear that when our markets are open for the wheat of the whole world, we shall be liable to be inundated with it, and that changes of a fearful amount will consequently take place in our agricultural prospects. Such an opinion is, I admit, at first sight, not unreasonable, and it certainly is incumbent upon those who, like myself, conceive that no material change will take place in our agriculture by the admission of foreign corn, to state fully the grounds upon which that opinion is founded. There are several principles which control and limit the power of exporting grain. In the first place, grain is a bulky and a perishable commodity, the carriage of which is attended with considerable cost and no slight risk. In the estimates I have mentioned, as given by Mr. Jacob, it appears that a large part of the charge arises from the transport of the corn from the place of its growth to that of its consumption. The following is his calculation:—

Sale price, 3s. per bushel, or per quarter, - -	L.1	4	0
Loss estimated at 20 per cent.,	0	4	9
Allowance for rent, calculated at 1-10th of the gross proceeds,	0	2	3
	L.1	11	0
If to this be added			
Shipping charge, or merchant's commission or profit,* - -	0	2	9
Freight, poundage and insurance to London, - -	0	8	0
Lighterage, landing charge, and commission in England, -	0	1	3
	L.2	3	0

This it is which limits the district from whence corn can be drawn—it is in truth confined to the borders of navigable rivers, or to the sea-coast, and will never be found to extend to any great distance inland, except where a scarcity in England or any other country capable of purchasing corn at a dear rate, so raises the price as to cover the additional expense incurred by this long and difficult car-

* At Dantzic.

riage. The usual supplies from Poland for instance are drawn chiefly from the mouths of the Vistula, and furnished by the immediate district through which that river runs. Mr. Jacob gives some interesting details with respect to its transport.

"There are two modes of conveying wheat to Dantzic by the Vistula. That which grows near the lower part of the river, comprehending Polish Prussia, and part of the province of Plock and of Masovia, in the kingdom of Poland, which is generally of inferior quality, is conveyed in covered boats, with shifting boards, that protect the cargo from rain, but not from pilfering. These vessels are long, and draw about fifteen inches water, and bring about 150 quarters of wheat. They are not, however, so well calculated for the upper parts of the river. From hence, where the Vistula first becomes navigable to below the junction of the Bug with that stream, the wheat is mostly conveyed to Dantzic in open flats. These are constructed on the banks in seasons of leisure, on spots far from the ordinary reach of the river, but which, when the rains of autumn, or the melted snow of the Carpathian mountains, in the spring, fill and overflow the river, are easily floated. Barges of this description are about seventy-five feet long and twenty broad, with a depth of two feet and a half. They are made of fir rudely put together, and fastened with wooden trenails, the corners dovetailed, and secured with light iron craposs, the only iron employed in the construction.

"A large tree, the length of the vessel, runs along the bottom, to which the timbers are secured. This roughly cut keelson rises nine or ten inches from the floor, and

hurdles are laid on it which extend to the sides. They are covered with mats made of rye-straw, and serve the purpose of dunage, leaving below a space in which the water that leaks through the sides and bottom, is received. The bulk is kept from the sides and ends of the barge by a similar plan. The water which these ill-constructed and imperfectly caulked vessels receive, is discharged at the ends and sides of the bulk of wheat. Vessels of this description draw from ten to twelve inches of water, and yet frequently get aground in descending the river. The cargoes usually consist of from 180 to 200 quarters of wheat.

"The wheat is thrown on the mats, piled as high as the gunwale, and left uncovered, exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather and to the pilfering of the crew. During the passage, the barge is carried along by the force of the stream, oars being merely used at the head and stern, to steer clear of the sand banks, which are numerous and shifting, and to direct the vessel in passing under the several bridges. These vessels are conducted by six or seven men. A small boat precedes with a man in it, who is employed in sounding, in order to avoid the shifting shoals. This mode of navigating is necessarily very slow, and during the progress of it, which lasts several weeks, and even months, the rain, if any falls, soon causes the wheat to grow, and the vessel assumes the appearance of a floating meadow. The shooting of the fibres soon forms a thick mat, and prevents the rain from penetrating more than an inch or two. The main bulk is protected by this kind of covering, and when that is thrown aside, is found in tolerable condition.

"The vessels are broken up at Dantzic, and the men return on foot."

I have made a long extract from this valuable report, as well because it is interesting itself, as because it throws considerable light on the mode in which poor countries are enabled to send their produce to foreign markets. Equally rude is the cultivation, and, we who live in a highly civilized and densely peopled country, can have but a faint idea of the smallness of the produce derived from a large surface, when produced under the ruder and more primitive forms of agriculture. The price of grain grown for export is so low, as not to pay for those more expensive processes by which cultivation is rendered so much more efficient—there is not sufficient strength or capital to work and clear the land, enclosures do not exist, draining is not attempted, manure cannot be purchased; and what is perhaps of still greater importance than all the rest, there is not that demand for animal food, which so largely prevails in richer countries, and on account of which it is, that the farm yard abounds in that essential requisite of all good farming; and without which, every farmer knows that cultivation in this country cannot be carried on otherwise, than in a way as ruinous to the cultivator as it is destructive to the land. It is remarked by Mr. Jacob, that constant export of corn im-

poverishes the country where it prevails, and that Poland feels the ill effects of her long continuance in this system. The only way, in truth, in which such a cultivation can go on at all, is, by allowing the land several years to rest after it is exhausted by two or three crops; and as it remains in a very impoverished state, I leave more experienced agriculturists than myself, to decide what can be expected from it, until nature has had ample time to recruit its strength. It is a poor country alone, in which an habitual system of exporting corn long continues: in one more flourishing, population rapidly increases, and in proportion as cultivation improves, consumers are found, who speedily take off the surplus produce. Indeed increase of food and increase of population are so inseparably connected, that in a healthy community, the latter may always be assumed as a necessary consequence of the former. The United States of America afford a proof of this; though still a country almost entirely agricultural, far from densely peopled, and possessing an extent of teritory, a soil, and a climate highly favourable to the production of grain, abounding in navigable rivers, and carrying on an immense trade with this country, we still find the supplies of corn we receive from thence

very limited in amount; the annual average of wheat imported from the United States, for the 21 years I have before alluded to, namely, from 1800 to 1821, amounts only to 87,376 quarters. Even Ireland, which, in proportion to its extent, is perhaps the largest exporting country of agricultural produce in the whole world, as well on account of its natural fertility as the inferior description of food, on which its population depend, the forced system of exports created by absentees, the stimulus caused by the possession of the English markets, to the exclusion of foreign produce, its insular situation, and admirable roads, sends us far less of wheat than would have been expected by any *a priori* reasoning upon such data. The annual average of grain and flour, of all sorts imported into Great Britain from Ireland, from the year 1817 to 1826, amounts to 1,363,673 quarters, of which only 318,817, are wheat and wheat flour. Poland is, as has been already stated, the great source from whence our foreign supplies are likely to be drawn. The total amount of the exports of wheat from Dantzic and Elbing is given by Mr. Jacob, from the year 1791 to 1825. It is remarkable in several respects; it shews in the first place, the smallness of exporting power, in that country pure-

ly agricultural; compared with its extent, it evinces the effect of high prices in drawing supplies from a greater distance; and it demonstrates the operation of the English corn laws, in repressing this trade. The exports taken in periods of five years, give an annual average as follows:

1791 to 1795	260 quarters
1796 to 1800	409
1801 to 1805	549

The five succeeding years give this result:

1821	126,136
1822	44,352
1823	68,450
1824	59,996
1825	118,681
	417,615
Average of the five years	83,523

The causes to which Mr. Jacob attributes the great increase in the exports evinced by the two periods ending in 1800 and 1805, are the deficiencies in produce which existed generally in Europe during the latter part of the last, and former part of the present century. England imported largely, owing as well to her natural position as an importing country, as to the defi-

cient harvests of 1794 and 1795, and 1800 and 1801, during which, not only was there no impediment to import foreign corn, but bounties to a large extent were paid on its importation. The prices in those years of scarcity rose to an immense height, having at one time attained the extravagant rate of 127s. per quarter. The effect, too, of these deficient years, was to work off stocks; and when once such an exhaustion has occurred, it requires some time to replace the deficiency thus caused. With respect to other countries, Mr. Jacob states, "that there was a constant demand in France for foreign corn from 1791 to 1801, owing to several deficient seasons having been experienced at the beginning of the Revolution. The agents of France were employed both in Europe and America in purchasing corn, and hiring neutral vessels to convey it to France; paying but little regard to the price they gave for it, or to the rate of freight at which it could be transported. Holland, which scarcely has ever grown corn sufficient for its own consumption, felt a great want, owing to its internal sources of supply from Germany and Flanders being diverted from the usual channels by the circumstances of the war." Sweden also participated in the dearth of that period,

and took as much foreign corn as her poverty could find the means of paying for. This accounts for the range of high price which prevailed in Europe during the period in question, and sufficiently explains the increase of exports from the mouths of the Vistula. The supplies were drawn from a greater distance; and Mr. Jacob mentions that he was informed in Poland, that in those years of prosperity to Polish agriculture, "wheat was brought by land carriage to the Vistula from distances far too great to bear the expenses without the enormous price which it bore in the markets of England and France. It was sent, according to these reports, not only from the farthest parts of Gallicia, but even from the vicinity of Brum and Olmutz in Moravia; and that some of the wheat of Hungary was conveyed over the Carpathian mountains to Cracow, and there shipped in flats for Dantzic and Elbing, whilst Volhynia and Podolia were emptied of their stores."

Mr. Jacob mentions these circumstances as reports; but he adds, "Whether they are true or not to the full extent stated, it is natural to suppose that the very high price which wheat had reached in the years under consideration, must have vastly extended the limits of the

circle from which it could be collected; and *would induce* the inhabitants *to dispatch to the high markets* whatever could be spared by the exercise of the most rigid economy."

Mr. Jacob further states, that, with a duty of 10s. or 12s. per quarter, payable on the import of foreign corn into Great Britain, and supposing the price in our markets to be from 60s. to 64s. there would not be such a profit derived as to induce any great exertions to increase cultivation in the districts bordering on the Vistula; and that none but the driest, heaviest, and whitest wheat would be imported. The inferior descriptions would not pay for importation, unless the average in England was much more than 64s.

The whole of the information contained in the report, from which these extracts are taken, is so valuable, that I regret it has not been rendered more accessible to the public, by appearing in a more popular form than that of a Parliamentary Report. In one respect, the opinion I have just quoted, appears to differ from the one I have given; Mr. Jacob seems to think that, with a duty of 10s. or 12s., it would require an average price of upwards of 64s. again to re-establish the trade with the Baltic; whereas, I have assumed, that that

effect would be produced by an average of 55s., —the truth is, that all calculations of this kind are liable to considerable error, and that nothing but experience can decide the exact level at which prices would settle, after the existence of the trade for so long a period as to have produced its full effects. If the opinion given by Mr. Jacob be found correct, I should be disposed to advocate a lower rate of duty than the one above stated, being convinced of the necessity of a regular trade in corn, and feeling some doubts whether, under these circumstances, it would be found to exist. A duty so high as to amount to a prohibition, except in periods of scarcity, would retain much of the evil of the present system; it would equally tend to create that fluctuation of price, and that difference of price between this and other countries, from whence I anticipate so much of injury. This uncertainty respecting the effect which an alteration in the law would produce, induces me to be of opinion, that it would be desirable, in the first instance, to commence with a graduated scale of duty, by which we should attain our object of re-establishing the trade, without exposing ourselves to those risks contingent upon experiments of this nature: this is the more necessary in the

first introduction of the improved system, on account of the effect opinion commonly produces for some time after any material change of this description. An attentive examination of these effects will show, that great caution should be used in the mode in which the change is introduced. Extravagant hopes on one side, and equally extravagant alarms on the other, agitate the public mind on the opening of new markets, and produce stagnation in the demand for home produce. The silk trade exemplifies this: long before the opening of the trade with foreign countries, it had begun to produce effects of an injurious nature to our manufactures, and the result will prove, to all appearance, that the panic created by the alteration of the law, was chiefly, if not altogether the result of an unfounded opinion; but the distress was not on that account the less real, and it is most desirable that, in amending the corn laws, we should not expose to unnecessary hazard, an interest so extensive and so important as the agricultural interest of this kingdom. The alarm already so industriously spread, and the extremely low price at which foreign corn is now sold, call for peculiar caution in this instance. I have no fear respecting the ultimate effect to be produced up-

on English agriculture by freedom of trade in corn; but I do fear the immediate effects, unless we proceed with great prudence in the alteration of the law; nor is there any inconsistency in this. All the advocates for a re-establishment of the trade in foreign corn, have acknowledged the necessity of a cautious approach to it, and have proposed various modes in which the change might most beneficially be effected. Mr. Ricardo, for instance, recommended commencing with a duty of 20s. per qr., and reducing it 1s. in each year, until it had reached 10s. The objections I have to this scheme are, that, with moderate prices in the British market, it would be a prohibitory duty for five or six years; and that with a high range of price it would create an uncertainty for so long a period as altogether to paralyse the internal trade in corn; and I am convinced this would produce a very injurious effect to the English agriculturist. A fixed duty is now more generally recommended; but I fear it is wholly inapplicable, as well to the case generally, as to our present circumstances. In the first place, they who advocate a fixed duty must be prepared to maintain it in periods of scarcity, which has never yet been attempted, and which would be an innovation

pregnant with the greatest peril to the safety of the community at such periods of feverish excitement and severe suffering,—they must either contemplate this, or propose that government should be invested with power to suspend the operation of the law at such seasons, or that the legislature should pass a temporary act for this purpose. Great objections present themselves in my opinion to both these modes of proceeding,—the first would delegate to government a most invidious power, which no good administration would wish to exercise, and which a weak one might convert to purposes injurious to the public interest. The second would be highly inconvenient, and not unattended with danger—it would frequently involve the necessity of Parliament assembling at unusual seasons, solely to discuss and settle this question, and it would add to the heat and irritation which are but too apt to disturb the public mind in times of dearth. Indeed, the more I reflect upon this subject, the more I am convinced the law ought to contain within itself an executory principle, which will accomplish the object of protection to our own agriculture, to the extent to which it may be affected by the peculiar burdens to which it is exposed, while it affords no interruption to the

freest admission of foreign corn in periods of scarcity. This will most easily be effected by a graduated scale of duty; that it entails the necessity of continuing the system of averages, and that averages have in some instances been productive of fraud and injury to the public interest, I am well aware:—but so long as duty upon the import of foreign corn forms a part of our policy, I fear it is impossible to avoid all the inconveniences with which such a system is necessarily connected. Besides when averages are to regulate the amount of duty, they are very different in their effects than when upon them depends the question—whether any trade in corn is to exist or not—the temptation to fraud in the first case is so much weaker than in the second, as no longer to be liable to the same objections. The system of averages, and a graduated scale of duty, has existed ever since the year 1773, and I am not aware of any valid objection having been made to it, until the interruption to the corn trade introduced by the law of 1815. This system, too, would facilitate the alteration of the law much more than a fixed duty could do; few would agree as to the amount of the latter, while the former might be so modified as to meet with general approbation amongst the

more moderate and enlightened of the parties interested in the question.

The duties I have recommended on former occasions, were as follows :

				s.	duty
When the price was at or under				40	25
From	40	to	45		20
From	45	to	50		15
From	50	to	55		10

I should be disposed to add to this, that on the price reaching 65s., the duty should be reduced to 5s., and on its rising to 70s., should cease altogether.

I do not maintain that this is the most perfect system that could be introduced, but it is that which, amidst the difficulties of the case, and the conflict of interests involved in this question, would, I believe, be found to contain the least of present evil, and facilitate our return to a more wholesome state. It would afford this facility of giving us that experience of the effect of a trade in foreign corn, without which we are now legislating somewhat in the dark. If, for instance, it were found, as I am strongly inclined to believe would be the case, that under this system the higher duties would never be demanded,

on account of the price being at or above 55s. and that 10s. became the duty payable at all times except those of unusual deficiency, it would establish the fact now so much controverted by the agriculturists, that a duty of 10s. would be an efficient protection to their interest—and that fact, once established by experience, the legislature would be enabled to alter the law upon that foundation, and to do away with the high duties, which would be, as the high duty of 24s. and 3s. formerly was, a mere dead letter. If, on the contrary, it were found, as is far from being impossible, that a duty to the amount of 10s. had a tendency to raise price beyond the average of 55s., there would be an equal facility in lowering it. The grand object is to re-establish an habitual trade, and that object being once accomplished, all further changes which the interests of the country might require, would be rendered comparatively easy.

My own opinion certainly is, that we must approximate in time more nearly to the system of free trade. I am strongly inclined to believe, that the natural price of grain in this country, the price I mean at which, without the payment of any duty upon import, wheat would commonly be sold, is higher than is generally

imagined, and that with the progress of society its price would increase. If it be true that with a duty of 10s., and an average price of 55s., we should import 5 or 600,000 quarters of foreign wheat—what would be the effect of a demand for England of double that quantity, a demand by no means unlikely to occur within a few years, on account of the increase of our population? Could it be supplied to us at the same rate? I have great doubts of it, and I know not from whence it could proceed; if a difficulty occurred in obtaining it without an increase of price, such an increase would take place, and the necessity of so high a duty would no longer exist. I am aware that improvements in agriculture, or the discovery of more fertile sources from whence supplies can be drawn, may counteract this tendency to an augmentation in price, and I am far from wishing to dogmatize upon a subject necessarily involved in so much obscurity as the future supply of food for the consumption of this country; but I own I do not see any great probability of such increased supplies being obtained without some augmentation of price; and upon that must chiefly depend the quantum of duty to be paid upon the import of foreign corn.

Great reliance is, I am aware, placed by some

on the supplies we may derive from the Black Sea? There can be no doubt of the large exports which take place every year from that quarter, larger, perhaps, than those which we draw from the Baltic. I have great doubts of any considerable portion of the corn grown on its shores finding its way to the English market. My reasons for these doubts are as follows: The Black Sea is in the immediate vicinity of countries regularly importing corn, Constantinople, Malta, the Grecian Archipelago. Some parts of Italy and Spain, draw their foreign supplies from thence, and commonly exhaust its stores; and it appears by a return presented to Parliament last year, that from the 5th January, 1817, when the imports from the Black Sea were first distinguished in the accounts kept at the Custom House up to 1826, only 50,155 quarters of wheat have been imported into this country from thence; the year of largest import is 1819, when it amounted to 20,685 quarters. The distance is so great that the expense and risk attending such an import are great impediments to its becoming an extensive traffic; and I have been assured by a merchant of eminence, thoroughly acquainted with the corn trade, that the wheat hitherto sent from thence has been of a description known in commerce by the designa-

tion of sour flour, and utterly unfit for the purpose of food.

There is another circumstance likely to create an increased demand for foreign corn in England, and that is, the increasing consumption of the various productions of grass land. This has been already adverted to; but its bearing upon this part of the subject, and upon the subject of duty on foreign corn, is so important as to require a fuller development.

In proportion as countries become densely peopled, the demand for animal food, for milk in its several shapes, and, consequently, for grass and hay, necessarily increases; the greater part of these cannot be imported from a distance in an uncured state; their bulk and the period of their duration render this impossible; thus it is that a natural monopoly of these products is established, and that all populous countries have so large a portion of their soil devoted either to meadow or pasture. Holland, we know, abounds in grass lands, so does the neighbourhood of London and other large towns. It is singular that, while the first effect of increasing population is to convert poor pasture into arable land, the ultimate effect is to reconvert a considerable portion of it into rich meadow or pasture.

There can be no doubt that the quantity of grass land in England is rapidly on the increase, and that, as its population augments, this species of cultivation will be greatly extended; this, too, is either land of the best quality, or the most advantageously situated; and it absorbs a considerable proportion of the manure which large towns produce. Hence arises a necessity for larger imports of foreign corn, and as grass land of this description is always the most valuable to the proprietor, its increase is one of the causes of the progressive augmentation in the value of landed property. From these considerations it is that I am strongly induced to believe we shall continue constantly increasing our imports of corn, and that the price will gradually increase. Such indeed appears to have been the case from the year 1773 to 1820, as appears by the following account of the import of foreign and Irish wheat into England.

*From 1773 to 1779 the annual average import was 70,863

From 1780 to 1789 . . .	23,350
1790 to 1799 . . .	321,609
1800 to 1809 . . .	574,753
1810 to 1820 . . .	684,643

The exports have been deducted.

In the price too there may be traced a progressive rise, though the dearth prevalent at the close of the last, and commencement of this century, together with the depreciation of the currency, and the interruption to the corn trade in the latter years of the war, caused the prices of the two latter periods to rise to a higher average than they would otherwise have attained.

	Years.	s.	d.
Average price from	1773 to 1779	44	6
	1780 to 1789	44	10
	1790 to 1799	55	8
	1800 to 1809	83	0
	1810 to 1820	87	10

The fact of the alterations of the corn law which have already been alluded to, is a further corroboration of this rise in price; we find by the law of 1773, 44s. as the price at which the duty of 6d. per qr. was payable; in 1791 it was raised to 54s., and in 1804 to 66s.; while the law of 1815 fixed 80s. as the import price. I believe these prices were not altogether arbitrary, but that the legislature, at the time of passing the act, took into consideration the average prices which had prevailed for some few years. Indeed I doubt whether the country would quietly have submitted to these

changes unless such a principle had appeared. These laws were all passed at periods of temporary depression of price, which then, as they would be now, if the trade were in existence, were attributed to the import of foreign corn, which, however, in fact had little or nothing to do with it; and it is to be remarked, that with the exception of the latter period, these laws never appear to have produced any effect at all. The price rose, as I imagine, by natural causes, after the passing of the act, and gave us virtually a free trade in corn, subject to a small duty.

It remains now to be seen what effect would be produced on our agriculture by the renewal of the trade in foreign corn; and the inquiry is the more necessary, as, upon this, as upon other parts of the subject, great exaggerations have prevailed. Both friends and foes of the corn law unite in one common opinion, namely, that the admission of foreign corn will have the effect of driving the poor land of this country out of cultivation; and they have thus raised an alarm in the minds of the agriculturists, which creates the most serious difficulties to those who advocate an alteration of the law. Nor is it to be wondered at; for if that were indeed the effect to be produced, the misery

and desolation it would create throughout the country, would be such that, deeply as I am convinced of the necessity of a change in the law, I own my zeal would be considerably abated by so dismal a prospect. My opinion however is, that no such effect would be produced. I do not believe a single acre, now cultivated with profit, would cease to be cultivated after the alteration of the law. My reasons on which this persuasion is founded are these—In the first place, although the average price of the last three or four years exhibits a great fall as compared with that which existed between 1810 and 1820, the latter being 87s. 10d., and the former under 60s., I am not aware of any quantity of poor land having been thereby thrown out of cultivation. I have neither seen nor heard of it; and being myself an occupier as well as a proprietor of poor land, I can take upon me to assert, that if, in some partial instances, such an effect has been produced, it at least has been any thing but extensive. The effect which has been produced I believe to be this, that very expensive manures have not been purchased so largely, and spread with so prodigal a hand upon the land; that draining and other expensive improvements have been carried on with less

rapidity, and that clover leys have in some instances been allowed to lie down for a longer period than heretofore. It may, however, be objected, that if foreign corn be admitted, it must displace an equal quantity of British growth; and this would be true if our ordinary produce were equal to our ordinary consumption, but of this I entertain great doubts. For forty-seven years, ending 1820, there never has occurred a period of five years in which an import of foreign corn has not existed; and it will be seen by a reference to the account already given of the imports of foreign corn, that, with one exception, each succeeding ten years exhibits an increase of these imports as compared with the period immediately antecedent—this can only be accounted for by supposing that the ordinary produce had fallen short of the ordinary consumption. The experience of the last six years appears certainly at first to lead to a different conclusion; but if there be any truth in the explanation I have given of the circumstances which have enabled us to go on during that time without an import of corn, except indeed that admitted during the last and present year,—namely, an exhaustion of the stock in hand, it will not be found to be such

an exception as to invalidate the hypothesis I have adopted. It should also be borne in mind that in 1820 we began with large stocks; there had occurred in the two antecedent years the largest import of wheat ever known, amounting to 1,582,379 quarters, and this was followed by one or two years of extraordinary abundance; the result of which was, that at the harvest of 1821 there was a much larger stock on hand than is usually the case, and which must have required, under any circumstances, a certain period to bring down to the usual level.

I have thus, Gentlemen, endeavoured to place before you the leading features of this most interesting and important subject, and if I have been at all successful in explaining to you the grounds of the opinion I entertain upon it, I shall, I hope, stand excused from the charge of needlessly agitating so momentous a question. I should indeed feel, that had I remained inactive, impressed as I am with the necessity of an alteration of this law, I should have betrayed a most important trust confided to my hands when elected as your representative, that of endeavouring to remove a most serious obstruction to the peace and the future welfare of the community. I should have held myself in some measure responsible for the evils which the continuance

of the present corn law would inevitably entail upon our country. The effort of combating the prejudice which prevails upon the subject has been painful to me in no ordinary degree; and deeply have I regretted the hostile attitude in which it has made me appear to a class so deservedly esteemed, as the agricultural body —with whom I am intimately allied, not only by a community of interest, but union of feeling in all save this question. I would implore them to weigh well the arguments which have been advanced upon it, and to reflect whether, independent of all pecuniary considerations, the re-establishment of that harmony which used to prevail amongst different classes in this country, and which this question has already done much to weaken, would not be cheaply purchased by concessions no less demanded by fair argument than called for by the experience of those benefits which have resulted from the former existence of that most important of all branches of commerce, the trade in corn. I would implore them to consider that agriculture never can be other than flourishing in that country where trade and manufactures abound; and that any other advantages to the agricultural interest than those which naturally arise from the increase of the industry, the skill and

capital of the country, are purchased at the expense of other classes, and though they may essentially injure, can never promote the real interest of England.

FINIS.

PRINTED BY A. BALFOUR AND CO.

PAPER CURRENCY

AND

CORN LAWS

CONSIDERED

SEPARATELY AND CONJOINTLY.

"En général l'art du gouvernement consiste à prendre le plus d'argent qu'on peut d'une grande partie des citoyens, pour le donner à une autre partie."

VOLTAIRE.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,
39, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

Price 2s.

LONDON
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES,
14, Charing-Cross.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE VISCOUNT MILTON,

THESE PAGES

ARE DEDICATED

BY AN ADMIRER

OF

HIS LORDSHIP'S MANLY AND DISINTERESTED CONDUCT,

THE AUTHOR.

CURRENCY.

THE invention of money is of the greatest antiquity: in the time of Abraham, money of metal was already in use. A metal was chosen because it is divisible; lasting, and not subject to loss by wear; a precious metal was chosen, one rare and of high value in commerce, because it was the most convenient of transport: the value of money was real, not conventional, it was paid by weight. The Greeks are said to have adopted the use of money from the Lydians, and the early Athenian coins bore the impression of an ox, the quantity of metal contained in the coin was equal in value to an ox; when oxen became more scarce or more abundant, a relative change of value would take place between

the coin and the animal. This led to high and low price, and in this fluctuation cunning and active people would naturally find an advantage; men in power, seeking this advantage, sought to influence the price of commodities without reference to their abundance or scarcity; and we find in history that an alteration of the value of money has been one of the many methods adopted by governments of all sorts, in order to take as much as possible from a great part of the people and give to another part. The monetary system of the Romans was, in early times of the Republic, subject to frequent attacks upon its integrity, and the coin was, under the plea of necessity, frequently degraded *. In the first Punic war, the ass, which was originally worth twelve ounces of copper, was reduced to two; and in the second Punic war † to one ounce. It was not until after the peace with Pyrrhus that silver was coined in Rome, and a denarius was worth ten asses, one hundred and twenty ounces of copper; in the second Punic war it was worth no more than twenty ounces: these reductions

* Plin. *Hist. Nat.* lib. 33. † About 40 years.

were made in an open undisguised manner, and under the plea of the public good; the mode was, a diminution of the quantity of metal, retaining the denomination of the coin. The Emperors proceeded differently, they mixed the baser with the precious metals, and this was called alloying. Didius Julianus began the system, and in the reign of Caracalla the silver money is supposed to have been one half alloy; in the time of Galienus the silver had altogether disappeared, and had been replaced by plated copper. The French livre, in the time of Charlemagne, was a pound of silver; it would require about seventy-two livres at this day to make a pound of twelve ounces.

The English pound also originally denoted a pound weight of silver, and was no imaginary coin.

By the discovery of America, which caused a great influx of the precious metals, the value of them was lowered, and coins, had they retained their original weight and degree of fineness, would still have been considerably diminished in marketable value; a money payment, which in the time of Char-

lemagne would have entertained a king's household, would now be a trifling pittance.

But it was reserved for more modern times to invent a more complete and wholesale method of searching the pockets of the people, of transferring property, of depriving labour of its reward. Money, metallic money, was intended to be a sign or representative of commodities; and it was found out that by creating a fictitious multiplication of those signs, public credit would become a substitute for the precious metals, and their value would be altered: this discovery gave rise to paper money. In a great part of civilized Europe, what is called government paper has been issued at different periods; it has borne originally a conventional value, it has fallen to a discount, it has ruined millions, and has been at length thrown aside, having become utterly worthless.

The paper system of England is different; but the object of all paper-money in the beginning is to increase the circulating medium, thereby to influence the price of commodities without reference to their abundance or scarcity; it is to break faith with those who

are in possession of the money previously established by law and custom: if it is limited by law, it is an injury to a given extent; if unlimited, or limited only by circumstances in the power of individuals, it renders those individuals the arbiters of the value of property, and is utterly subversive of that security of property upon which society is founded.

Some men get fortunes by patient industry, some by superiority of skill and talent, some by chance, perhaps most by a combination of all these things; but acquisition of fortune would have been rare compared to what we have witnessed of late years, had not the laws unfixed and rendered fluctuating the measure of value: these laws have placed the cunning and the enterprising in a situation to acquire enormous wealth, at the expense of the inexperienced, the young, the weak, and the ignorant.

There have existed men who have maintained a proposition of this nature—public debt is public benefit—an acquisition of so much riches, a fund for the support of commerce and agriculture, and every increase of

taxation, increases the ability to bear it: these were men, who, finding themselves growing rich by a system, cared not how many millions it reduced to poverty and misery. The increase of the circulating medium during the late war, enabled the landowner to pay ostensibly high taxes, and to find himself richer than he was before those taxes were imposed; hence he concluded that debt and taxes are public benefits.

The people did, indeed, manifest an "*ignorant impatience* of *taxation.*"

The annuitant felt very differently on this subject: he saw his property perishing from year to year before his face; he descended in the scale of society, in spite of prudence and frugality; he became convinced that security of property, the great end of all government, was denied to him: the labourer, the artisan, the professional man, suffered, but not in an equal degree. Are not these persons entitled to expect protection both in person and property from a just and good government? Every wanton augmentation of the circulating medium is an injustice committed upon this class of persons, and every sudden and unex-

pected diminution of it is a grievance of which farmers and traders, who have laid in stock under other circumstances, have a right to complain. A tampering with the currency is an expedient which no necessity can justify. The precious metals have been, from the earliest times, estimated as a sign or representative of commodities; relying upon this estimation, labour has received as its reward coin, the marketable value of which has been supposed to be nearly unvarying; labour so rewarded, joined with care and frugality, has handed down for generations such savings from father to son. Is it to be borne that a deposit so sacred should be violated? Within the last fifty years the price of the necessaries of life have been quadrupled; three-fourths of the savings amassed previously to 1775, have thus, by financial measures, been forcibly taken away from their lawful owners. I shall not maintain that idle annuitants are the most valuable part of the community, but they are entitled to protection, and, in point of utility, may be about upon a par with consumers like themselves, the great land-owners: but the mischief is not confined to these

persons, it extends to the most industrious and useful classes; it discourages frugality, for wages saved can never be fully enjoyed. Gold and silver coin are the signs or representatives of commodities, and paper money is supposed to represent gold and silver; but however good its credit, it is really never good for the amount to which it pretends, except at the moment when it is paid. A five pound note, it is evident, can never be worth more than five pounds, it may turn out to be worth less, or nothing at all, therefore deducting risk, a five pound note is never worth five pounds: but there is an abundance of considerations to induce most people to take paper money; for instance, ignorance, a blind following of that which we have been in the habit of doing, and that which we see others do; the influence of persons whose interest it is to keep up the system; and last, though not least, a conviction or suspicion that it is for our own interest to do so, and this conviction or suspicion is very generally unfounded. The loss which we contemplate by the abolition of paper money is often imaginary; a standard immovably and irrevocably fixed is the only

basis upon which the great majority of the people can be safe. The Romans altered their money for the benefit of the Republic, the Emperors for themselves, and the English for the profit of the land-owners.

At the time the question of Scotch banking was in agitation, a paper appeared, in which were maintained the following propositions*: "Paper money does not necessarily keep up the price of corn,"—open the ports and you will see that in spite of paper money corn will be cheap; by this mode of argument one grievance is justified by the perpetration of another; it is not necessary to decide which is the greater curse, paper money or a monopoly of corn, suffice it that both together are intolerable.

"Loans from bankers were employed not in consumption but in production." Loans were employed too frequently, neither in consumption nor in production, but in retention.

In the slang of the *Farmer's Journal*, corn sold at a price somewhat lower than usual, is said to be subject to a forced sale, and the exorbitant price at which the poor man has of late years obtained his loaf, has been prin-

*Blackwood's Magazine.

cipally owing to the advances of country bankers, which enabled the farmer to starve the consumer into compliance with his demands. "Paper money does not cause fluctuation of prices." The price of wheat fluctuated exceedingly when there was no other than metallic money in the seventeenth century. Paper money issued and withdrawn at the discretion of individuals must be subject to augmentation and diminution in quantity; it will not be denied that price fluctuates with the quantity of circulating medium. In the middle and end of the seventeenth century, the fluctuation in the price of wheat may be accounted for by the exhausted state of the country, consequent upon the civil wars; be it remembered that in those times wheat did not constitute the food of the great body of the people.

"A circulating medium cannot be superabundant;" "no one will say that a circulating medium ought never to exceed a certain sum;" "it must fluctuate with trade, population, riches," &c. Gold and silver have a value as merchandise, exclusive of that conventional value which they have acquired

as a circulating medium and representative of commodities; paper money has no intrinsic value whatever; metals are durable, transportable, they are to be gained only by labour, and their quantity cannot be increased at the discretion or in compliance with the caprice of any man, or set of men; a circulating medium composed of these metals, perhaps, cannot be redundant; it never can be limited to a certain sum, and with an increase of trade and riches it must increase; but a circulating medium consisting of land, stock, debt, merchandise, &c. &c., blown about the world by the magic powers of credit, may easily be redundant. It must be redundant when the law allows paper to be exchanged for paper, and the promise to pay to be perpetually evaded; when undue influence is used in forcing the circulation of that paper; when the necessaries of life are at double the price which is paid in any other part of the world; and when the superior skill and industry of our workmen, the ingenuity of our mechanists, the magnitude of our capital, and all our local advantages so admirably adapted to commerce and manufactures, are

insufficient to enable our people to compete with rivals inferior to them in all these essentials, simply because those rivals are fed at half the cost. "A nation ought always to possess as much circulating medium as the honest legitimate needs of its pecuniary interests call for." Such honesty such legitimate needs as the debtor boasts, who while he rolls in luxury leaves his creditor to steep his crust in tears.

"But a metallic currency is no defence against fluctuation of prices, because a bad harvest makes corn dear;" be it so. "High prices are a certain indication of prosperity." A bad harvest produces high prices, therefore a bad harvest is a certain indication of prosperity. These propositions are sufficiently bereft of reason and common sense; but the last I shall quote exceeds everything that has gone before. "After all, the small note bill in 1822 did not raise the price of corn!!!"

It has been said that there may be too much money (real money) in a country, and that the talents and virtue of the Spaniards were buried in the mass of gold and silver

which flowed into Spain on the discovery of America, by means of which that people was enabled to live without labour, and so gave itself up to idleness. This is possible: the very large amount of our debt places England in a situation something similar; a subdivision of property has taken place, and thousands who are supposed to have no property in the soil, are enabled to enjoy the luxuries of life without labour or exertion of any kind. What class of persons is it that bears the burden of supporting these people? If the possessor of five hundred acres of land can live at least as well at this present time as he could fifty years ago; if he can purchase with his rent as many of the necessaries and luxuries of life as his grandfather could do fifty years ago upon the same estate, I do not see how his land contributes to the state anything more than it did fifty years ago; or if it does, such additional contribution is made up to it in the shape of increased rent. Many, many millions have been spent, twenty-five millions are called for annually to pay the interest of the debt, somebody must be the poorer, and yet at no period either during

or since the war, has the proprietor of any given quantity of land been in a worse situation than he was before the beginning of the war. Can it be said that the land really bears or ever did bear any part of the burden of the war? If it should appear, that the increase of the circulating medium, caused by an issue of paper money, and supported by protecting the national bank in refusing payment to its creditors, produced this effect, namely, that it enabled the land to shift off from itself upon something else, that weight of taxes with which it has appeared to be loaded, it will create surprise how any measure so monstrous, so directly opposed to the eternal spirit of justice, should ever have been adopted by the British legislature. This was the case, it is evident, when corn was at a war price; since the peace it has required the assistance of the corn laws to keep off the weight of taxation from the land, and these operating in conjunction with an unlimited fictitious currency, issued at the discretion of individuals, have had the desired effect.

As the law now stands, the issuing of one

pound notes is to cease in October; but it must be a sanguine person indeed who can suppose for a moment that this pledge made to return to the ancient standard in October 1826, with whatever solemnity, will be better kept than those frequent and solemn pledges which have been made to the same effect on former occasions. Nevertheless the most efficient members of the cabinet have clearly and unequivocally expressed a conviction of the unjustifiable and detrimental nature of paper money, of the same denomination with the coin, because it drives that coin out of circulation, and raises prices *ad infinitum.* It remains to be seen if those ministers can lend themselves to carry on a system, which they avow "robs the labourer of his reward, and deprives the labouring classes of the means of existence."

The mischief of small paper money is by no means confined to the breaking of banks. If banks did not break, the evil would be intolerable, there would be no check to the issuing of paper, and such a quantity would be put forth, that it would be discontinued as of no value whatever; coin would return,

or no man would trust another, and barter would, in the end, be the only means of carrying on commercial intercourse.

A fixed measure of value is perfectly incompatible with a circulating medium made at pleasure; and without a fixed measure of value, security of property is an empty name. The ancient method practised by our Edwards and Henrys, that of squeezing the Jews who had sucked up the treasure of the nation, was equally unjust, but not so effectual as the later-found expedient of keeping the circulating medium in a state of fluctuation, by means of which in a trice, a week's wages are conjured into provision for a day.

The difficulty of obtaining the precious metals appears to have been their principal recommendation as a medium of exchange; and in order to render them incapable of doing that office, it would only be necessary to find them in as great abundance as we find stone, or coal, or, perhaps, iron. Yet it has been thought that paper, which may be multiplied at pleasure without labour, without end, or limit, at the discretion or the caprice

of a few individuals, rich men panting to become richer, or adventurers to whom all change gives a chance of gain, that such paper should serve as a circulating medium without falling into confusion. The beginning of paper money is spoliation, the end of it must be confusion; strange that those, who on almost all occasions deprecate innovation, should adopt that which has innovated more than war or revolution.

In justification of the Bank stoppage in 1797, no plea has been offered, save the necessity of raising money to carry on the war against revolutionary France, and the impossibility of raising it by other means; the persons who suffered by that measure, that is, those who paid, were only a part of the nation, and that part not the most wealthy: but a sum of money which was levied upon a part of the nation, could *à fortiori* have been levied upon the whole of the nation, therefore when we say that supplies sufficient to carry on the war could not have been raised without adopting that measure, we mean, that the government was not strong enough to be able to compel a certain

rich and powerful class to contribute to the necessities of the state; or in other words, if the expense of the war had been felt at the moment, by those who influence the decision upon the great question of war or peace, it would have been decided in favour of peace, and the money would not have been spent; but it is now found out that the interest of the debt cannot continue to be paid without being felt, and very sensibly felt by those who influence the decisions of the legislature. It is wished to find some expedient which may neutralize the laws which levy taxes upon the land; this might be done by unceasingly augmenting the circulating medium, but it is evident, that if the circulating medium be augmented from day to day, it must approach to a value infinitely small, or it must occasionally take a retrograde movement, and be subject to diminution; in this latter case must be contemplated certain ruin of trade, breaking up of manufacturing establishments; distress, misery, riot, confusion, bloodshed; anarchy and civil war could not fail to close the scene. Panics would become necessary to clear the system,

as thunder storms make the air serene, But can such things be reconciled with the welfare of the nation, and the happiness of the people? What then is to be done? I shall venture but one slight suggestion on the subject of a remedy, it is, that we should abjure the principles of Machiavelli, which we find productive only of misery and mischief, that we should renounce all those *grands coups d'etât* upon which the great statesman built his pretensions to fame thirty years ago, that we should take justice for our guide.

CORN LAWS.

No monopoly ought to be maintained, except upon strong and plain proof that it is for the advantage of the whole, or at least, of by far the greater part of the community.

If the legislature prohibit the importation of corn in favour of the corn grower, leaving other producers (manufacturers, &c.) to be exposed to foreign competition, foreign commerce and manufactures must either succumb, or must owe their support to some or all of the following circumstances; to the superior skill or industry of our workmen, to the ingenuity of our mechanists and projectors, to local advantages, or to superior capital. If our manufacturers be more skilful or more industrious than those of other countries, who but themselves has any right to reap the benefit of that skill and industry? Are those laws to be borne, which say, be-

cause those men are diligent and ingenious, they shall be compelled to pay a higher price for their food, and the advantages arising from their good qualities shall be given to the proprietor of the soil, as if they grew upon the glebe?

If we possess coal and iron mines more abundant and more adapted to the purposes of trade than other countries, why should not the owners of those subterraneous treasures of the earth enjoy their property as fully and as freely as those to whom it has been allotted to be masters of its surface? If canals or other internal means of communication give facility to our commerce, there are men whose labour and whose capital have brought those works to the state of perfection which they now exhibit.

If it is to capital we owe our commercial superiority, let the capitalist have his due: let it be remembered that capital as well as other commodities naturally seeks the market where it is duly appreciated, and we may have to regret (when too late) that a spirit of partiality in our legislators should have driven to take shelter among our foreign

rivals, that capital which now forms the pride and the strength of the British empire. The privilege of furnishing the British market with corn is claimed by the British growers: to render this proposition just and reasonable, a similar privilege should be conferred upon every other description of producers, and Britain should admit nothing into her ports which can tend to diminish the consumption of any article produced at home; that is, Britain should hold no commercial communication with any other part of the world. This generally exclusive plan would at least not incur the objection of partiality, all would be used alike; but if an exclusive system must be formed, the last thing which should be the object of it, is the brute produce of the earth.

Brute produce is the last object of importation which a civilized people ought to reject, because in the production of it nature does more, and art and labour less, than in any other produce whatever; consequently, to till a barren soil, or to multiply labour upon a generous one, is to refuse the gratuitous aid of the more powerful operator,

nature, in order to waste the strength of the people upon the desert.

If the world were one empire, and if the proprietors of the most barren and ungrateful soils could legislate for all the world, might they not forbid the cultivation of the more generous soils with as much shew of reason as our agriculturists can boast, when they debar the people of England from the enjoyment of nature's bounty, that they may be compelled by hunger to give encouragement to what is called a spirit of improvement?

It is urged that the British islands can supply sufficient grain for their own consumption, and can continue to increase that supply to an increasing population and demand. It may be possible; but England, loaded with taxes, cannot, without great protecting duties, compete in the production of corn with untaxed countries.

Can England, loaded with taxes, compete with untaxed countries in the production of cotton goods or hardware, without a high protecting duty? This will not be denied; therefore it is not skill or industry which is deficient in the people of England, but some-

thing else, it is extent of territory, soil; it is the powers of nature which operate gratuitously in the production of corn, and not in the fabrication of cotton goods, which are wanted; and so great an additional quantity of labour is required in consequence of the absence of these powers of nature, that Englishmen are unequal to the task, and England, loaded with taxes, is unable to compete in the production of corn with untaxed countries; but those taxes we must suppose necessary. The conclusion is, that England, under existing irremediable circumstances, is unable to supply herself with corn, without a high protecting duty; which means a partial tax, ruinous to all other productions, which tax would be applied to the purpose of enabling the English people to strive against the efforts of nature. Ministers, with a majority in their favour, may fill a sieve with water; but no task of Sisyphus was ever so vain as that which they seem to have imposed upon themselves, to keep up a population of twenty millions, and at the same time to shut the ports to foreign grain.

If such a project were practicable, the

greater part of the earth would have been made in vain; if it be proposed to starve down the population to about seven millions and a half, the question becomes altogether different, but I take for granted that a numerous population is desirable, because population is strength; but if an increasing population is to be fed upon a limited space, it must be done by a cost of labour, increasing in a higher proportion, and the return being less in proportion to the labour, the remuneration of labour must diminish: hence pauperism. If the Island of Teneriffe were the head of a great empire, itself containing twenty millions of inhabitants, possessing dominion over one hundred millions of people in the east, and over as many in the west, the energies of such an empire zealously applied, aided by prohibitory laws, might, perhaps, force wheat, or grapes, or pines, to grow up to the very summit of the peak. What would be the state of the people in the Island of Teneriffe? The Pyramids of Egypt are a lasting monument; they show to what enormous and to what useless labours, a herd of two-legged animals may be driven.

Other arguments used by the advocates of monopoly, are,

We cannot, at all times, and under all circumstances, command a supply of foreign corn.

Such corn, if not positively refused, may be taxed to our ruin.

On all common occasions our demand will be as necessary to the nations who furnish our supplies, as their corn will be to us; when it becomes a question of empire, it is the *ultima ratio regum* that must decide. It would be desirable that Gibraltar should grow its own food, but we do not think it in danger because that is not the case.

Again, The home trade is of much more importance to the nation than manufactures and foreign trade, and the activity of the home market depends upon the actual situation of farming affairs.

A people of cultivators and proprietors is infinitely superior, both morally and physically, to a people of traders and manufacturers. What is it that constitutes the importance of the home trade? Is it mines, fisheries, the fertility of the soil? The

British islands are not of extent sufficient to be highly important in this point of view; is it not rather to ships, colonies, and commerce, that we ought to attribute the importance of the home trade? Upon examination it will appear that the resources of the home trade are situated not at home, but abroad, and that a system of exclusion, which, to be lasting, must be general, would very much tend to diminish those resources. Would it not be madness to give up foreign commerce and manufactures for that which depends upon foreign commerce and manufactures? The superiority of cultivators to traders is to be looked for in the world of romance, in novels rather than in the world, as it really exists. As an agricultural nation, England must ever be a petty one; but if we were desirous that England should be happy, but not great, it is not perfectly clear that the exclusive practice of agriculture would gratify that desire. I trust that liberty is held by every Englishman to be an indispensable ingredient in the composition of happiness. Cultivators are not the most zealous in the cause of independence, and it is

not to tillers of the earth that a people jealous of its privileges would wish to intrust their conservation. Plutarch says, when the Cilonian sedition was appeased at Athens, the town fell into its ancient divisions. The people of the mountain insisted upon a popular government, those of the plain were for a government of the principal men, and the inhabitants who lived near the sea, for a mixture of the two. The occupation of tilling a fertile soil influences government and laws, and all measures of government are pretty equal to a well-fed yeomanry, provided it be allowed to enjoy its abundant harvests, and a high price be insured for the contents of the barn.

Another argument which has been advanced in favour of prohibition, is this.

The aristocracy derives its revenues from the land; the influential post it occupies in the state would be untenable, if those resources were cut off; and it would be monstrous to give up tillage in order to depend for bread upon foreigners, and at the same time to destroy our constitution by humbling to the dust that branch of it which gives it

stability. This is high language; but this or something equivalent (I have not the original) was advanced by a man* who once stood forward in the foremost rank of the people's advocates: it must have escaped him upon this occasion, that our constitution is one that constitutes anything rather than a pure aristocracy. The aristocracy is but one branch; there are two others, the king and the commons, but this is a principle which could not fail to sacrifice to the aggrandizement of that one branch, both the prerogative of the crown and the privileges of the people. Whether a manufacturing population be more or less desirable, more moral or valuable, whether agriculture or commerce be of more importance to the country, is not the question. The question is, if it be politic to sacrifice commerce to agriculture, or if both be necessary to constitute the grandeur and to ensure the prosperity of the British empire; it is, if the destruction of any part of our national resources can ultimately tend to benefit that other part to which it is sacrificed; it is, if the monopoly be rigidly enforced, will the price of corn be

* Grattan.

kept up when foreign commerce, manufactures, and capital shall have been driven from our shores. Hume says, "when one nation has got the start of another in a trade, it is very difficult for the latter to gain the ground which she has lost, because of the superior skill and industry of the former, and the greater stock of which its merchants are possessed." Let us pause before we complete the ruin of our manufacturers, or compel them to emigrate. England, once brought back to be a country of proprietors and of cultivators, is inconsiderable in extent of territory, and in climate and soil inferior to many who make a poor figure in the world. To make a country rich, powerful, and happy, something is required besides the capacity of raising corn: witness Poland, able to produce, but unable to consume its produce; the food of the cultivator is carried away from that unfortunate country for the use of the more fortunate, or more skilful workman, who plies the loom or the anvil, and is altogether ignorant of the use of the plough. Rome, in her splendour, drew her supplies of corn from the provinces, not from Italy itself, and so it must ever be with countries of dense population:

but the country is over populous. If England were less populous, estates might be more extensive, game more plentiful and more easily preserved; the great man would not be so often mortified by seeing crowds whose industry renders them independent of his bounty, and indifferent to his humours. In a nation of proprietors and cultivators, the people is submissive, because dependent; if these advantages be preferable to national greatness, glory, and renown, then may we wish to return to a system under the influence of which these islands did not contain more than one-third of the number of their present inhabitants. First, in the race of civilization, having attained a degree of power disproportioned to the extent of our territory, we may voluntarily abandon the sources from which have risen wealth, power, and science, to return to a petty baronial state little removed from the confines of barbarism.

Then may we complain that "manufacturers have been diverted from their natural occupation, the culture of the soil, and that they ought to return to the plough."

CURRENCY

AND

CORN LAWS.

THE trade of England, it is often said, has become so extensive, the revenue collected so enormous, that nothing but paper money could make the payments required. This proposition might be disputed; but as it goes to justify the issue of the large notes only, twenty or fifty sovereigns not being inconvenient to carry, it may be granted. The amount of circulating medium is equal to the amount of commodities multiplied by the price. Let M be circulating medium, C commodities, P price, $M = P \times C$, but laws prohibiting the importation of grain tend to render grain, that is C, a limited quantity. Suppose C a limited quantity, then, M being doubled, P must be doubled,

$$M = P \times C \therefore 2M = 2P \times C;$$

and again, if P be doubled, M must be doubled,

$$P = \frac{M}{C} \therefore 2P = \frac{2M}{C}.$$

The action and reaction of M upon P, and of P upon M, are equal and perpetual.

Farmers having grain, are not satisfied with the price offered, but they want money, they borrow of bankers; this is a legitimate call upon the bankers for their notes, excellent security; the price rises in consequence, more notes become necessary in consequence of rise of price, M and P act upon each other mutually, the system goes on, *et vires acquirit eundo.*

But C is not a limited quantity, the encouragement given to agriculture by raising prices increases the produce. High price increases supply by preventing consumption, as well as by encouraging production. Produce, it will be admitted, is increased with labour and ever growing difficulties; paper money and price have no other check or obstacle than such as may arise from men's moderation in pursuit of riches. M and P are increased with excessive facility, C with

labour and difficulty. A wedge which the woodman has placed too near the edge of the block, breaks out and has no effect on the stronger side. The conclusion drawn from the supposition of C being a fixed quantity, will not be far wide of truth.

The circulating medium, as it has existed since 1797, could not but become like a snow-ball, more bulky the longer it remained in motion. Price which should vary only in consequence of the variation in the positive or relative quantity of commodities, has been raised to excess by a cause which has no relation whatever to abundance or scarcity; by a cause which could be brought into action at the discretion or caprice of individuals, which could be made subservient to interested speculations. A perpetual invasion of property and of rights, which the laws ought to have kept sacred and intact, was the consequence; the miseries of war were suffered in the midst of peace, rapine and spoliation were effected without violence; no man's property was safe from the insidious changes thus brought about. When the electric fluid, thus generated, had been collected

in sufficient quantity, then came the thunder storm, panic, diminution of circulating medium, and consequent diminution of price, ruin of commerce and manufactures, distress and tumult. How long the prosperity of agriculture will survive, remains to be seen; and all these things are the natural and inevitable effect of causes so plain, that those who run may read. If to remove our neighbour's land-mark has always been accounted a heinous crime, if Jewish and Gentile laws, and more than all, human laws, the eternal spirit of justice, if all have ever been decidedly opposed to such proceedings, how could it be supposed that the mark which sets a boundary to every man's property could be moved at the discretion of individuals, without causing confusion worse confounded; of individuals without office, or authority to inspire confidence in their decisions, nay, of individuals whose pursuits in life render them of all others the most improper to be trusted with such an employment. It is not pretended to believe that a man whose principal object in life is to get riches, whose means of getting consist in

taking advantage of changes in the value of things, having the power to cause those changes, will not make use of it.

It must be evident, that from a system so founded and so supported, nothing stable or stationary can be expected; it contains a principle of perpetual fluctuation, of innovation, of revolution; its effect upon society is to unsettle it, and to make every class dissatisfied with the situation in which it is placed. It produces an appalling transfer of property, and an elevation and fall of families subversive of order. It reverses the natural order of things, in many instances making the landlord inferior to his own tenant. It causes respect to be paid to riches in preference to virtue, talent, or honourable station.

It places thousands of families of gentry in this position: they must be conscious that by remaining in their own country they sacrifice many comforts which their circumstances would afford elsewhere, that they forego gratifications which other countries offer to them: thus it is at variance with patriotism, and natural affection. Under the influence of this system, labour is inadequately rewarded,

legitimate commerce and professions are unproductive, and military men, both of army and navy, curse as folly, that youthful ardour which once led them to waste the best years of their existence in thankless, fruitless, undistinguished wanderings.

I have said that in many instances it makes the landlord inferior to the tenant.

A landed proprietor having no source of income but a farm let for six hundred pounds per annum, is not able to live upon an equality with his tenant having a small sum with which to stock it; upon a supposition of larger means this assertion will hold good. A proprietor of one thousand pounds per annum, or even more, with a large family; a farmer renting to the same amount, is in a situation to give his family a better education: *ceteris paribus*, his family will make the best figure in the next or the third generation. Is it then to be wondered at, that society should be unsettled, that every thing should be in the air, and that luxury and an expensive style of living, destructive of the virtues of peaceful agriculture, should have been introduced? Trade is become the pro-

fession of desperate men, and of gamblers; speculation and jobbing, a traffic which adds nothing to the common stock, and improves nothing is the most successful, discourages patient industry, and renders uninviting the long process by which respectability used to be gained in the professions. Having declared this system to be so generally noxious, to say for whom it is profitable would be invidious. I conceive that ultimately such a system can do good to no one; the fermentation which takes place in society brings the dregs to the top, the bubble swims for a moment, and is then lost in succeeding bubbles like the last. Empires rise and fall, and everything sublunary has its beginning and its end; but that fatality which is supposed to bring on decay, that fortune which is said to rule the destiny of empires is a chimera, it exists nowhere but in imagination; every state has within itself a principle of misgovernment which must, in the end, destroy it.

The revolutions of commerce are so plainly described by the hand of history, that it is not permitted to doubt that she, though allured by natural causes, by soil and climate

and local conveniences, to be fixed, must be protected by just and equal laws. The object of commerce is the exportation and importation of merchandise for the advantage of an individual, and it so happens that the individual in seeking his own good, cannot avoid contributing to the good of those around him, of the state to which he belongs, and of mankind in general. The original cause of these beneficial and widely-extending effects, the first and main spring is self, and if self be put out of the question the cause ceases. Commerce is destroyed by excessive duties, by injustice, and vexations, which impose difficulties outweighing the advantages to be expected; she flies from wherever she finds herself oppressed; countries which are now a desert, were formerly the most flourishing in the world, and on rocks and sands and bogs does she establish her court, if there she may find protection.

In two instances within the range of modern history, commerce has disputed with the sea, the ground upon which she has succeeded in fixing her seat,—Venice and Holland. Natural advantages may tempt her,

but she is prepared to overcome the most formidable difficulties, if liberty and equitable laws be held out as a reward; without these, she disdains an earthly paradise. Affrighted by rapine and injustice, no clime, however beauteous, can hold her: witness those countries where Seleucus Nicator once formed the project of uniting the Caspian with the Euxine Sea, then most flourishing, their only trade now is to sell their own children to the Turks and Persians. What is become of the trade of the Tyrians, the Phenicians, the Carthaginians, and all their numerous colonies? But to come nearer to our own home, and to our times, What is become of the trade of Flanders, of Ghent, and of Bruges, formerly so rich? Was there no reason for this falling off? History has left very visible traces of these events; it was the tyranny and bigotry of Philip II. of Spain, which destroyed the trade and manufactures of the Netherlands, and drove them to seek shelter under better laws. To admit for a moment that trade can be carried on for the direct and immediate benefit of the state, or of any favoured class not engaged

in it, would lead to regulations utterly destructive of commercial enterprise.

That spirit of exact and rigid justice which commerce is said to promote, even at the expense of better feelings, revolts at the idea of sowing that another may reap. A merchant cannot enrich himself without sharing his gains with many: he pays duties, and the state derives revenue from his transactions; he employs labourers, and enables them to consume the produce of the cultivator, but his labours have in view his own advantage, not that of the state, nor that of the land. Such a principle would soon impart the air of a desert to a busy and flourishing town; would make Liverpool, or Bristol, or Manchester, appear like Venice, or Bruges, or Ghent. Let it not be admitted, for a moment, that commerce and manufactures can be carried on for the direct and immediate benefit of agriculture.

But this is not intended, it will be said; all that is asked for is a *remunerating price*, such as may enable the farmer to pay the taxes required of him by the government. This remunerating price means about double

that which is paid on the Continent by the rivals of English workmen; and the goods to be fabricated under these widely-differing circumstances are to be exposed for sale in the same market. If the manufacturer is to remunerate the cultivator, who is to remunerate the manufacturer? He, no doubt, would be willing to make the consumer pay, and this might be practicable, if the British government could say to the nations, you shall buy no goods but such as have been fabricated by men who feed upon corn at a *remunerating price;* but as this cannot be done, as British manufacturers are exposed to competition even in the home market, as British goods can claim no favour in the foreign market, but such as is given to the excellence of their quality, and to their cheapness, the disadvantages under which our workmen labour, are manifest and galling. That skill, industry, and machinery, must be, indeed, superior, which can enable them to contend against such odds: but machinery and skill every day become more and more equalized; machines are exported or invented, foreigners grow more expert, or if they are not to be

found capable of rivalling us, do not our own people emigrate for that purpose? and what just man can blame them? Thus it is evident, that unremitted labour will soon be the only superiority which will remain in the power of our unfortunate operatives; paying doubly for their food, they must work doubly, or abridge nature of her supply. If trade could go on under these circumstances, its principal object would be, not the advantage of the merchant, that would be a secondary consideration, but to enable the labourer to consume provisions at a high price: but commerce would disdain these conditions; she is a high-minded dame, and will yield only upon honourable terms.

In 1822, the cry of agricultural distress induced the government to adopt certain measures, for the purpose of raising the price of the produce of the land. The circulating medium was augmented by various means; prices rose. Such was the abundance of money, as it was called, that government, by threatening repayment to its creditors, was enabled to compel them to suffer a reduction of their dividends. Persons having lent

money on mortgage, were obliged, by the same process, to be satisfied with a reduced income. The necessaries of life rose, in marketable value, at least seventy-five per cent.: thus persons living on the interest of money were compelled to meet increased expenses, with decreased means. To evade the pressure caused by these cruel measures, millions were sent out of the country upon foreign loans and other adventures, showers of fictitious money having deprived of a great part of its rentable value that capital which had been gained by toil, and saved by care and frugality. Much of these loans was sent out in the shape of merchandise, and for a time manufactures flourished at the expense of the unfortunates who had preferred a risk of all to a certain loss: a profusion of orders occasioned an extension of establishments, over speculation, and over trading. During the war, the interest of money was, in reality, very considerably above five per cent; so that, but for the maximum which the laws have imposed, the rent of money might have risen, as well as the rent of land. Had interest risen to twenty per cent., it would have

done no more than keep land and money in the same relative situation. The rent of each would have been quadrupled. But the actual state of the case is this; money lent at five per cent. during the last thirty years, has produced no increase whatever. It is thus proved:—Suppose one hundred pounds to have been lent in 1796, calculate the accumulation of interest upon it up to 1826, it will be found that the sum, however much increased in nominal amount, will scarcely equal the original one hundred pounds in marketable value, had it been expended in 1796. The depreciation in the value of the money would fully equal the accumulation; so that all interest of money which has been spent, has been so much deducted from the amount of the capital, not income derived from that capital, and given for its use; and many a prudent person who has thought to live within his income, and rather to grow richer than poorer, has all the time been guilty of the extravagance of living upon his principal, and wasting his substance. To those capitalists who have lent their money upon legal interest, it would have been the

same thing if every one, with common consent, had locked up his money in his desk, and had taken, from time to time, such portions as his necessities required; yet it has been thought incumbent upon the legislature to take measures to lower the interest of money. Its nominal amount would have been reduced, in 1823, to nearly nothing, but for the foreign loans, and other drains, which the desire of finding employment for money, real or fictitious, gave rise to. It is said that a great proportion of the smaller speculators in foreign loans, are persons on the half-pay of the army or navy. It should be observed, that the measures adopted in 1822, (by raising the necessaries of life seventy-five per cent.) deprived men, in this situation, of a large portion of that allowance, which this most rich and most munificent nation had granted to their services, their toils, a remuneration for loss of health, of blood, of money. The risk incurred in these adventures was awful, and such as prudence condemned; but to men accustomed to set their life upon the cast, such risk was trifling, and, with many, the exigence of the case was peremptory.

But this view of affairs, is not that of the statesman. The money was collected, is spent; the excitement given to manufactures has subsided; languor has succeeded; England has declined, and is declining.

In spite of these misfortunes, an attachment to paper money still prevails with a great part of the community. Men cannot bear an apparent and merely nominal reduction of their claims, though their actual situation might be improved in consequence of it; and though with that improvement should come security, without which tranquillity and peace of mind is rarely enjoyed. With respect to those men who follow the business of making those paper signs of money, by means of which the circulating medium is swollen, it appears that a passion like that of gaming, which absorbs every other, has taken possession of them. Within the last few months, many followers of the banking profession, who were blessed with abundance, even to overflowing, have been hurled from their stations in society, by the whirlwind of varying values; but the warning is disregarded. It is acknowledged that many banks

were involved in ruin, though protected by enormous wealth, and by prudence the most circumspect; and yet respectable and respected men, men eminently wealthy, continue the practice of banking, as if nothing had happened. The motive to issue, the love of gain, unceasing in the application of its persuasive powers, urges them to continue the game, and they seem to experience as little apprehension of the fate which they have seen overtake their neighbours and their equals, as could be expected from gamblers at a hazard table. A profit attends issues of paper, all are desirous of it: no reflecting man can avoid seeing that this must produce excess of circulating medium, and this excess cannot be abated, unaccompanied by national misfortune.

The Scotch pretend that their system of banking almost excludes the possibility of failures; but it has, I think, been demonstrated, that failing of banks is but one objection among many, both great and grievous, which may be made to a circulation of small notes.

If all that their advocates advance were

granted, great stress being laid upon the fact that small notes have been used in Scotland with advantage during a century, it would not be proved that the whole empire could be supplied with paper money, *ad libitum*, without incurring the difficulties which have been described. One of two consequences is inevitable, either an irresistible motive, always in action, creates a continuous and infinite augmentation of the circulating medium, an accompanying and infinite increase of price, and, consequently, a valuation of money, approaching to something infinitely small, or, speaking practically, to nothing; or a forced diminution of the circulating medium must take place: gold must be demanded where it is not to be had, and banks must break upon whatever plan they may be formed. Every objection which can be urged against a paper currency, is equally applicable to public and to private banks: and if we suppose the national bank to establish its branches in the provinces, and thus to furnish circulating medium to the whole of the country, there are objections over and above all these, which are in themselves de-

cisive in the mind of every man who feels regard for the constitution of England; such a state of things would put into the hands of a chartered company the privilege of fixing the value of every man's property, and of varying that value at pleasure. The bank would be of more importance than the king and parliament. If we suppose the ministers to acquire the power of directing the circulating medium, of augmenting or diminishing it at pleasure, nothing more is required to render the government as despotic as any the sun looks down upon. Of what use is liberty, or security of person, if the means by which we live are made precarious and dependent.

It is a favourite assertion that the debt has been contracted in paper, and cannot be paid in gold. Security of person and property is the benefit for the sake of which men have given up the liberty of savage life, and have entered into society. All laws should be made with a view to diffuse universally this security; violence and bloodshed create horror, and every man's arm is raised against the murderer. From such feeling is derived a tolerable assurance against

personal violence, in England; but an invasion of property which occurs every day raises no feelings of the sort, and the parties themselves are unaware that they do that which is unjust. Every additional pound note issued detracts from the value of the pound note already in circulation. In matters of property men readily give way to selfishness, especially when acting in great numbers: that which, as an individual, a man would be ashamed to do for himself, he readily does for his party, and succeeds in persuading himself that he does right. But there are certain feelings planted by nature in the heart of an honest man, which declare a solemn contract to be a sacred thing, and the violation of it, to be an act revolting to every feeling of honour, truth, and justice; and no jesuitical plea of necessity can justify the infringement of those feelings.

Nevertheless, the worst thing that can happen to our country is a continuation of the uncertainty which now prevails; the evils of excessive fluctuation are intolerable. In vain do we seek to palliate or avoid them, they are unavoidable; but fluctuation itself

may be corrected by either of these two measures, more effectually by both, metallic money, and open ports. To return to the equation, which though fanciful is true, as things now are, C. is unaugmentable and P. varies as M. Let then M. be limited by renouncing absolutely and universally throughout the Empire the use of small paper money, in order that gold may be indispensably necessary to change the larger notes, and that paper may find a limit in the difficulty of procuring more than a certain quantity of gold to be so employed: or, by opening the ports for the importation of corn at a moderate duty, let C. be made augmentable, in order that the action and reaction of M. and P. may be moderated, and something like a fixed measure of value be established: then will the fruits of the earth be obtained in England at a cost of labour not very much exceeding that which is bestowed abroad; our manufacturers will be relieved from a burden which is about to destroy them; labour with less money will be better rewarded; fewer fortunes will be made; but the wealth acquired by individuals will add to

the wealth of the community, not be as at present a mere difference of distribution; and watching the change of values will not be the commonest way to obtain it.

Paley has expressed these sentiments: "The final view of all rational politics is, to produce the greatest quantity of happiness in a given tract of country.....The quantity of happiness is augmented principally by augmenting the number of percipients;....consequently, the decay of population is the greatest evil that a state can suffer."

The advocates for reducing the population would do well to examine this sentiment in conjunction with the following facts. Hunting is that mode of procuring subsistence, which requires the largest territory in proportion to the population; next in gradation upon this scale are pastoral habits; one step more of civilization teaches men to plough the earth, to sow and to reap, and a greater number of people is supported. But when the arts of life are highly cultivated, population thickens, wants increase, the greatest possible quantity of employment is created, and this brings into existence the greatest

possible number of human beings. Where labourers are plentiful, labour is cheap, and provisions are naturally dearer than in more remote situations; labour, therefore, to be productive must do something more than exert that rude strength which nature has given to all. Qualities that are common must be cheap; skill is required in the lowest labourer, and grosser operations are left to less civilized nations, to men scattered over a wide extent of earth, whose position gives them an advantage in the exercise of the primitive calling of the husbandman.

Savages detest everything approaching to civilization. The Arab of the desert whose dependence is on his flocks and herds, eking out a scanty subsistence by robbery, thinks any employment derogatory, except that of wandering in search of pasturage, and spoil; he despises the Arab who submits to the labours of cultivation and lives in a fixed habitation. Agriculture appears to him degrading; that which we look upon as a primitive and honourable occupation, appears to him a degenerate submission.

If this be prejudice, what is that feeling

which would go back from a state more advanced than agriculture, a state which calls into life more human beings than could exist within the same limits purely by the aid of agriculture. Have the advocates for a retrograde movement of society decided how far it is intended to recede? Captivated by stories of clans and chieftains, some may judge even the duties of husbandry coarse and uninteresting, a pastoral life would be more replete with incident, and better adorn a tale; some may think it more noble to go back to savage life. In the indulgence of these freaks or of any one of them, sacrifices which it is terrible to think of would be necessary; suffice it to say that one which England would necessarily incur is, the loss of Empire.

THE END.

London: Printed by W. Clowes, 14, Charing-cross.

AN EXAMINATION

OF THE

POLICY AND TENDENCY

OF

RELIEVING

DISTRESSED MANUFACTURERS

By Public Subscription:

WITH SOME

REMARKS ON LORD LIVERPOOL's RECOMMENDATION

OF THOSE DISTRESSED PERSONS IN A MASS

TO THE POOR's RATES,

AND

SOME INQUIRY AS TO WHAT LAW THERE EXISTS WHEREWITH TO SUPPORT HIS LORDSHIP'S RECOMMENDATION.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY BALDWIN, CRADOCK, & JOY; LONGMAN, REES, AND CO. PATERNOSTER-ROW; AND J. RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

1826.

370.971

AN EXAMINATION,

&c.

No man of sense and feeling, be his situation in life what it may, can continue an unalarmed, much less an unconcerned, observer of the scenes of insolvency, bankruptcy, and consequent distress that have lately taken possession of almost every inch of commercial ground in England.

So great a proportion of the trading community has become insolvent, and so many indeed of the remainder are paralized, and unable to proceed with their usual scale of business, as to throw the general mass of the able-bodied operatives out of employment, and, of course, *as they have generally conducted themselves*, during the late five years of apparently "unexampled prosperity," into a state of suffering, hunger, and privation, that is enough to move the most callous heart to compassion.

In so desperate a situation as this, the first consideration has been—how to carry instant relief

to perishing multitudes: no country is so ready at doing this, and no country does do it, upon all pressing occasions, so effectually as England: and as far as subscription, and other means of that sort will effect it, this has been already done, and is still proceeding, and spreading with an honourable and cheerful exertion, that cannot be equalled in any other country; and that never is even imitated.

The next and second consideration is—to search for, and to probe to the very bottom, the real and genuine cause of such a horrible convulsion; in a time of profound peace, in the midst of the spread of seeming wealth, and increased commerce; of wealth indeed augmented, apparently, and commerce extended (beyond the example of all former times) to a degree, and by so instantaneous a revival, as to surprise the most sanguine well-wishers of the country into such expressions as that of the nation being "once more restored to the most unexampled prosperity;" for if we recollect the distresses of so late an æra as that of the year 1819 only, we find this to be the case. This was the public language from the height of the throne itself.

The use of this examination will be to apply the moral considerations arising from it, to the future prevention of such returns of ruin and misery, as startle and almost terrify every man of an independent condition in society, into a resolution to

quit a country where there seems so little that is stable, so little safe, and nothing peaceable, nothing quiet. For if these alternations of extensive, but unsound trading, and their accompanying habits of extravagant expenditure and luxurious living, amongst both the employers and employed, according to their different situations equally imprudent and profuse, and which have most mistakenly been deemed "unexampled prosperity," are to become the settled and habitual condition of the country, with succeeding seasons of such times as the present, the sooner the prudent and peaceable part of the community, that has it in its power to do so, (that part which constitutes the the middle rank at least) seeks a safer retreat in some other and distant region, the better.

A country covered with crowded factories, regulated as to morals, foresight, and prudence, as the nearly innumerable factories of England have been for the last five years, is not exactly a country covered with so many seminaries of banc and evil, because there are still amongst this congregated mass some, who amidst the general pollution of these hot-beds of demoralization, and corrupt training, are prudent and desirable people;*

* It cannot be thought that the factory system of manfacturing has yet attained its full sweep of immorality—a great many of the elder class of workmen yet remain, who were brought up and had arrived at manhood under the domestic system; the better part of these are not to be corrupted to the condition that those exhibit who entered a factory as soon as they were at all able to be put to labour—these

but, notwithstanding such exception, in point of prudence at least, above all other things, the general bulk of the workpeople of these places, are the most unhappy and culpable race, that ever existed in a civilized country.

I speak from my own knowledge, when I assert, that the workmen, &c. employed in the manufactories of Yorkshire, have had such an opportunity of sparing and saving, (and that with ease to themselves) during the extensive commerce with which this country has been filled, towards their own support, under such an adverse change as has now taken place, as working people never had since manufactures were established amongst mankind.

The wages of these men, working by hundreds in the different factories were, and are now, (when employed) for a first-rate workman, from 20*s*. to 30*s*. and to 32*s*. and 34*s*. a week; and when their families of children are employed with them, in many cases the better hands obtain, together

may almost be said to have sucked in imprudent habits and vice with their mother's milk; at least they have been plunged amongst them as soon as they could perceive and discriminate. No one but him who remembers the old family domestic system of children working under the eyes of their parents in their own houses, and who appreciates the difference between them and those who are daily shut in with the crowd of the factory, can form an estimate of the loss that that change has produced to the morals of Great Britain; and is the country generally any richer, much less any happier for it? Let the present scene of unexampled insolvency and misery answer the question!!

with such children, 50*s*. a week; but I know and can point out around me, families, and that not a few, consisting of an able-bodied father, and a couple of sons from 16 to 21 years old, with a wife, and two or three younger children, who could altogether clear in wages, for months and years in continuance, not less than four pounds ten shillings a week.

Scarcely any of these people have saved a shilling; they have lived in a kind of profuse riot, and are now in want!

The writer of this has been concerned in commerce himself, and has most particular reason to remember, that about forty years ago, *the very best Hands* then to be found in the manufactory, were employed at the constant and settled rate of [illegible] shillings a week, for years together; inferior hands had proportionably, according to their ability, less; indeed wages were never higher than that scale, till after the introduction of machinery.

Wheat at that time generally fluctuated in price from five shillings to six shillings a bushel—beef and mutton were from threepence halfpenny to fivepence a pound. Wheat here, during the time that people have been earning the wages stated above, for the last five years, has fluctuated from eight to nine shillings a bushel, and butchers' meat has been from sevenpence to eightpence a pound.

It is therefore demonstrated, that these men

have had an opportunity *of easily* saving more money during their late prosperity, than their fathers had both to live upon, and to save from also; and those fathers, I again speak from my own knowledge, never experienced one-tenth part of the distress that these people are continually falling into; only because they were more in the habit of endeavouring to save, and lay up something; whenever they found an opportunity arise, to do so, and did not comparatively look to the poor's rates as the men of these days do.

Is it then, in these times, to be considered as [illegible] concomitant circumstance, to be permanently [illegible]d inseparably connected with the condition of a [illegible]nufacturing community, that they are to earn [illegible]ger wages than any other description of artisans [illegible] the world; to live on an expensive and impru[illegible]nt scale, while in employment, and the moment [illegible]hat some unfavourable change occurs, (which always was, and always will be the case with trade and commerce,) that they are then to be supported by general and extensive subscriptions, large in amount, from every generous individual *unacquainted with their deserts, their morals, and their habits,* collected from the most distant corners of the kingdom in all directions? And, added to which, are they also to consume the fruits of the frugality and prudence of men of their own rank in life, or of others near unto it, but of different occupations to them?—are they to sack the hard-earned, but still

small accumulations of the little farmer?—are they immediately to eat up the savings of better-disposed and better-conducted people, whose prudent provision for their own necessities in that day of adversity, which comes in one degree or another to all, and which has led them to exercise the virtues of economy, sobriety, care, and foresight?—is this vice of thoughtless imprudence, when it has run its own career, to assail all the fruits of the endeavours of virtuous discretion, by an indiscriminate attack upon the poor's rates? If this is to be the permanent situation of the manufacturing classes, their very establishment is a curse both to themselves, and especially to their neighbours, and to the country in general; and better would it really be, that Lord Liverpool's very inconsiderate intimation to the deputation that attended upon him some few years back, respecting the tax on wool, was the fact; for he is reported to have answered, viz. that "it was no matter if half their trade was in the midst of the sea, for it seemed to him to breed nothing but sedition and poor's rates." On the contrary, I say the evil may be easily remedied, and these manufacturers as easily preserved from distress, and from being a burthen to themselves or to any body else.

And the question only is—How is this to be done?—Is it to be believed that men have any just reason for being unavoidably, every four or five years, in a state of uncontrollable distress—

men who in general are earning such wages as I have already stated—wages out of which, were their habits and dispositions those of sobriety, economy, and prudent self-denial, they might, with little exception, have accumulated enough in two years wherewith to maintain themselves a third year without work: if it should so happen that any unfavourable change, in so short a revolution, subjected them to such a privation of employment, and which in the course of five years, the term which they have now enjoyed of uninterrupted prosperity, would have the effect, had they common discretion, to raise three out of four of them, into a station, above that of a workman, and to bring them into a class of tradesmen and masters, probably soon as extensively and creditably so, as most of their employers themselves.

One of the component elements in the causes of their wages being so high, is the consideration of their employ being liable to interruptions, being irregular, and in a degree, uncertain; was it as sure, as regular, and as lasting as that of the husbandman, I have no question in my mind, but that their wages would presently sink to nearly the same level, with an allowance, perhaps, for its somewhat want of equal salubrity.

And, if circumstances render it the unavoidable nature of trade to withdraw itself, for a time, every two or three years, but also to furnish those who are as workmen supported by it, with suffi-

cient remuneration in two years wherewith to sustain themselves in necessary comfort by good management and prudent economy, during that season also, when employment forsakes them, it is the bounden duty of these men so to live, as to make their inconstant, but abundant wages, afford them an even and regulated support, instead of living in riot for one while, and then for the rest falling into destitution and want, and rising into outrage and tumult, and under an exposure to famine, making a general invasion on the poor's rates; the true character of which conduct is, that reckless imprudence shall needlessly consume its own sufficient means, and then be countenanced in falling promiscuously upon those of other men.

And it is the Poor Laws, and they alone, looking forward to, and depending upon which, that bereave these people of all thoughts of ever providing for the common changes and exigencies of life; while these rates are suffered to continue an acknowledged provision for able-bodied men and their families, of profligate habits, or even of careless imprudent expensiveness of conduct, there can never exist any prospect of such people, let their earnings be what they may, (the more the worse for prudence, it is found) ever being otherwise when their work is interrupted, than in immediate distress.

Abolish, or rather no longer continue to misconstrue these pernicious and ruinous laws, that

form a pestilent Demoralization, which intercepts in its growth, and worm-eats and destroys every germ of prudence in the scale and habits of their living and expenditure; put down, I say, this flagitious and dishonest nuisance, consisting of an unprincipled dependence upon other men's means, and the workmen of factories, and others around them, now wholly influenced by their example, will instantly begin to return to the economical, beneficial, and praise-worthy rules that governed their forefathers, under the domestic system of manufacturing—rules of living, and habits of expending, under which, with a quarter of these people's means, they were gradually, but constantly, providing for the common reverses of life, and rearing up a daily provision for the unavoidable necessities of old age, and for the winter of their days.

I would here premise, and far be it from the thoughts of the writer of this address to proceed without openly and voluntarily declaring, that he conceives it a duty incumbent on this, and on every society of rational beings—a duty both to God and Man—not to suffer any individual whatever, to undergo the distresses of continued hunger and extreme want, who can plainly and fairly make out a case showing that he has exerted all moral and practicable endeavours, or indeed a fair and virtuous proportion of those habits, to try to make a provision from his income against reverses in his

condition, or that he has had no possible opportunity of doing so; who can show that the pressure of the hardships and unfortunate circumstances of life have sat so close, and so heavily upon him, as to have rendered such efforts impracticable. There are many cases, no doubt, where this is the fact, arising from ill health, mental insufficiency, or the different untoward casualties of life; but, notwithstanding that, such cases never make any great proportion of the general mass of distress: nor, I venture to say, would they ever go long unredressed or unremedied; indeed, to use the words of the Committee of the House of Commons on the Poor Laws, of 1819, I may say, "such real and true objects of charity would cost the nation but little to maintain, and support them, and it is to be doubted *they have the least share in the public reliefs.*" These truly have been seldom known to press hard, either upon the generority of public subscription, or on the poor's rates; and this is the only class of cases arising amongst the able-bodied, that is entitled either legally, or morally to sustentation from the fruits of other men's prudence.

The factory system has more than doubled and trebled the wages of these distressed men, has congregated them in vicious masses, and has dispelled their fathers' honest disdain of parish relief; and, generally speaking, has dissipated and dispelled all economical dispositions, all moral restrictions on expense, and want and destitution,

misery, outrage, tumult, and death are the results. "Nullum Numen adest, si non sit Prudentia."

And, instead of statesmen and legislators assisting to destroy their dependance on the baneful habits of pauperism, what do we find? We hear the prime minister of England answering, at the very outset of the discussions respecting them—"That they have, however, the poor's rates to resort to"—"God forbid," says another noble lord, "that they should not have them to resort to."—A third reiterates that, the benefits *which the country* will now reap from the Poor Laws is enough to reconcile him for ever to their worst consequences"—and this passes current in debate and is disseminated over the whole empire as the standing law of the land, and thus in an instant are the whole of the well-founded propositions and salutary explanations, which were stated and urged by the Committees appointed by Parliament on the Poor Laws, denying that the relief of the able-bodied poor, as they are called, rested upon any law, and asserting that such expenditure of the rates was, on the contrary, opposed to all law, are set aside, and the old misconstructions and pernicious practices under these laws, are returned to, and reinstated in full force.

In contradiction, however to this assertion of Lord Liverpool, that "they have the poor's rates to resort to," I assert most decidedly and most directly, that they have not the poor's rate to resort

to; that for them no such rates exist, and that Lord Liverpool has just as much law to support him in recommending the bulk of these people to the rents of the Duke of Bedford's estate, or to the rents of any other estate in the kingdom, as to the poor's rates; and before he again asserts, "that they have, however, the poor's rates to resort to," let Lord Liverpool point out the statute and the clause in any of the ancient Acts of Parliament, by which the relief of *the able-bodied poor*, with or without families, are stated to make any part of the original system of the Poor Laws; and then let him show by what statute, and by what clause of that statute, an "order of maintenance," from any authority whatever, is valid, "without it adjudges the party seeking relief to be impotent as well as poor." If thus stands the more ancient law on the subject of these able-bodied, imprudent applicants, thus recommended by the prime minister of Great Britain to it for support, let us see how recent enactments support their claims. We find that the Act 59 Geo. III. cap. 12, sec. 1, which constitutes select vestries, and which is the last statute of any importance made respecting the poor and its system of laws, directs, "that every such select vestry is thereby empowered and required to take into consideration *the character and conduct* of the poor person to be relieved, and shall be at liberty *to distinguish in the relief* to be granted between the deserving and *the idle, extra-*

vagant, and profligate poor, and such select vestry shall make orders in writing for such relief *as they shall think requisite.*"

The second section of this act may very probably be thought to render the power to reject these people's claims to relief at least more disputable, but it only does so at first sight; for the magistrates are there restricted "to have reference to the character and conduct of the applicant," investing them, therefore, with a power to deny relief so sought, and of course conferring no positive right on such applicants to any thing more than the magistrates *re-consideration.*

But I will here transcribe an extract from the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons *on those laws*, which sat in 1819, with Mr. Sturges Bourne, I believe, at their head. The labours of which Committee, the sound, legal, and extensive views which they took of parish relief to able-bodied workmen, never has, and scarcely (especially had they been followed up with the legislation thereby recommended) ever can be repaid, with sufficient gratitude. Begging first, however, to ask the question,—Whether any person who has read these reports, and who now reads Lord Liverpool's speeches, can be persuaded that that noble lord, and sagacious minister ever saw them, (and yet they were supposed at the time to usher forth the sentiments, and feelings of government on the subject of the Poor Laws) or, having

read them, that he has not done what is equally blameable in having driven them entirely from his mind, or in recommending such able-bodied operatives as I am treating of, to have recourse to the poor's rates, (bending I suppose to what he conceives a strong necessity) he does not act contrary to his own secret, but acknowledged consciousness of what is right.

The Report then made by the Committee above alluded to runs thus:—

"The further consideration of the laws for the relief of the poor, and of the *practical* application of them, has tended to confirm in the opinion of your Committee the correctness of that view of the subject which was taken by the Committee in the year 1817, and the soundness of the principles which were *then stated* in their report.

"To that document, therefore, your committee would rather refer, than repeat a detailed statement of the evil, which must be necessarily inherent in any system which undertakes to provide for the indigent by a compulsory contribution from the funds accumulated by the industry of others, and of the aggravation of that evil by a lax or mistaken execution of the law. The consideration that upwards of two centuries had elapsed since the system was established, that it had operated in the mean time, and *latterly*, with augmented force, upon the habits, the pursuits, the feelings, and the social economy of a large class of

the community, induced that committee to attempt to correct in the first instance the administration of the law, and to consider such means as might, by their gradual operation, effect a transition to a better order of things, and revive those habits of industry and *frugality*, which a reliance upon an indiscriminate parish support must necessarily impair."

"They, consequently, recommended to the House, and the legislature has since enacted various provisions for the better administration of this system. Regulations have been prescribed for the conduct of parish vestries, with a view of securing a more efficient control over that expenditure, which is become so large in its amount, as to require the vigilant attention of those most interested in the welfare of the parish. It has also specially enjoined, that both the select vestry and magistrates, in determining the nature and quantity of relief required in particular cases, shall take into *their consideration* the character and conduct of the applicant, in order that the same measure of relief may not be extended to the wants arising from unavoidable misfortune, on the one hand, and from idleness and extravagance on the other; it being important that the express words of the law should leave the duty of *such discrimination* no longer doubtful."

"By such provisions, and more especially by the establishment of select vestries and assistant

overseers; 'your committee is sanguine in its hopes that the mischief resulting from the reliance on parish support, may be in some degree palliated, and that the loose and careless administration of the law, by which it has been aggravated, will be essentially corrected."

"But this is not all that your committee deems requisite to secure the kingdom from the calamities that must attend the continued progress of this evil, and it does not believe that such security can be obtained, as long as by an erroneous construction as your committee believes, of the act of Elizabeth, parishes are supposed liable to be called upon to effect the impracticable purpose of finding employment for all who may at any time require it. It believes the ill consequences which have arisen from this practice are most palpable, and most mischievous, and your committee is therefore particularly anxious to recal the most serious attention of the House to this construction, which has been put practically on this part of the statute."

"Pecuniary relief seems indisputably to have been only contemplated by this act for the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them being poor, and not able to work, and also for putting out children to be apprentices; but the direction to set to work all persons having no means to maintain them, and using no ordinary or daily trade of life to get their living by, has been acted

upon, as if it were a clear authority for requiring the parish to find employment for all who want it. The committee of 1817 questioned the soundness of this construction, &c. &c.

"The further consideration and investigation of this subject has confirmed its opinion; for your committee is not aware that the courts of law have *at any time*, construed the act according to this practice, indeed the decision referred to in the former report (1817, page 20), in which it was held, that *an order of maintenance is not valid, without it adjudges the party seeking relief to be impotent*, leads to an opposite conclusion."

If reference be also had to the authority of early writers, or to those who in modern times, have bestowed the most attention on this subject, the same inference would follow. In a work, which has been lately cited by an able anonymous author, entitled "a Description of England by W. Harrison," and which, as published in the Chronicles of Hollinshed, is brought down to the year 1586, it is stated, that the poor are divided into three sorts; so that some are poor by impotency, as the fatherless child, the aged, blind, or lame, and the diseased person that is judged to be incurable. The second are poor by casualty, as the wounded soldier, the decayed householder, and the sick person visited with grievous, and painful diseases. The third consisteth of thriftless poor; as the rioter that hath consumed all, &c. &c., and finally the rogue, &c.

"The two first sorts, that is to say, the poor by impotency, and the poor by casualty, are the true poor indeed, for whom the Word doth bind us to make some daily provision, &c."

But to come nearer to our own times, and to the most laborious, copious, and valuable work on this subject, we find the opinion of the judicious and unprejudiced author of "the State of the poor," expressed in the following decided terms:—

"From the language of various statutes concerning the poor which passed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and which being in pari materiâ, explain each other, either in matter of law, or illustrate each other in matter of fact, it may fairly be implied to prove that the relief of the able bodied poor, with or without families, was no part of the original system of the Poor Laws. The 3rd of Will. and Mary, c. 11. §. 11. corroborates this idea, which is put out of doubt by the preamble to 8. and 9. Will. and Mary, c. 30, §. 2, to the end, that the money raised *only for the relief of such as are as well impotent as poor*, may not be misapplied, &c. &c.

What is said in this report in denial of there being any law to compel parishes to find employment for able bodied applicants, does not apply much to the occurrences of just the present crisis; the amount and liberality of the national subscriptions have rendered such demands unnecessary, *at least for a little while*; but what is of the high-

est importance, is the convincing demonstration, which the quotations afford, that the pretended right of able bodied persons with, or without families, to parish relief, (now brought forward, and recommended by Lord Liverpool, the first Lord of the Treasury of Great Britain) is not sanctioned by, nor to be found in any Statute, or Law of England.

And does Lord Liverpool suppose that there will not be found men, who, seeing as they did see, in 1818 and 1819, the whole value and produce of their property absorbed by the poor's rates; and knowing also how little law there is, upon the support and strength of which, to commit this indirect robbery, upon the slender savings and property of prudence, who will refuse to submit to such unlawful levies, even though it should be pleaded, "that they are the usage (the wrongful usage) of centuries," and, will Magistrates assembled in petty sessions, grant warrants to enforce distresses upon the means of those who refuse to pay such rates, and for such purposes? will the Court of King's Bench, although it has already evaded the law on the question of parish relief, to able bodied applicants, in the case recently brought before it, of Rex *v.* Collins; will it follow up that vacillation by confirming on a certiorari, any such process of the local magistrate? Even if all this is done, there will, I trust, be found a method and the means too, of redress.

The district Magistracy may naturally, tho' not perhaps altogether, be expected to refuse to support the wholesome line of conduct, however consistent with law, pointed out by the Committees of the House of Commons, either because they will not or dare not *defend the law* against the perversion of practice, sanctioned by the approval of such men as Lord Liverpool, &c. &c.; certainly this in them is perhaps to be looked for, though they ought to be as independent, and as fearless in the execution of their duties, as men of any rank, and have no occasion to be otherwise; and when standing upon, and supporting the law of England against such a pernicious departure therefrom, as the general mismanagement of the Poor Laws has presented in their execution, and thanks to Lord Liverpool does yet present; they ought to set at defiance the unthinking misconstructions and perversions of any set of men, however high their rank in life may be.

I hope the discerning spirit of Dr. Chalmers will not let go altogether unpublished to the world, what he thinks of Lord Liverpool's late recommendation of the multitudes of manufacturers, starving not from necessity, but from improvidence, to the poor's rates, in a mass. I hope that such estimates of the poor laws as he, Mr. Sturges Bourne, Mr. Malthus, and others have made, and which have enlightened, purified, and strengthened the mind of every genuine patriot in the land, on the score of this nuisance, will

lead them again not to rest, without at this time publishing their opinion, on the justice of the claim of workmen, who have earned and obtained ampler means of maintenance, than any other operatives upon earth, to the scanty reserves, made by all degrees of other men's prudence, and of the wisdom too, of these extensive, and well-meant subscriptions, but whose principle and consequences both, must be identified with those of the Poor Laws, in their moral effects upon the social economy of the manufacturing classes, and who may hereafter be deceived and disappointed in relying upon a continuance of this generosity, and a recurrence of the like liberality, when their deserts and claims to it, are better, and more extensively understood. The public which subscribes so bounteously, would do well to observe how inconsiderable are the subscriptions among the affluent, and people of property in the districts where the workmen reside, and of course where their condition and deserts, are more bottomly and perfectly understood.

It is, however, scarcely meant by this, that the improvident weaver or spinner who has lived in a kind of riot for the last five years, and who has weekly and monthly exhausted the last shilling of his unprecedented earnings, should be at *this time* stopped in his passage to the fruits of his neighbour's frugality and saving. No; till the Government has fairly and publicly told him, and warned him by a general enactment to that purpose, that if he persists in

neglecting to make provision during the seasons of full employment, and ample wages, for the constant reverses, common to his condition and line of life, (and indeed almost common to every condition) he must be left to the consequences of his strange improvidence; till it has openly said by legislating on the poor laws, in the way recommended by the committees on that subject, of 1817 and 1819, that he has no support to expect from them in his exigence, when that shall arrive, after having wasted his own sufficient means, and after having neglected to husband them, for the purposes of support, in the coming days of change and adversity; while the governing powers do not do this, while the practice of the country is recommended to continue, that into which it has declined, while the expressions of legislators, and the apathy of statesmen, thus give him full range for expecting to be sustained when out of work, by the destructive system of parish relief, to which he has always looked *down*, and now to added subscriptions, to which he will also, hereafter, continue to look. Under these circumstances, and while this is not done, can we wonder that this spread of improvidence should continue to exist, and to increase? and may not sophistry with much plausibility assert the hardship and injustice even, of stopping him in his way, either to the alms basket of the subscriber, or in his depredations on the poor's rates.

The issuing of local notes by every trades-

man who has temporary credit enough to enable him to pass them, in ever so limited a circle, and that by every *banker* of this sort, who can write his own name; and by abundance of such bankers who cannot even do that * is neither more nor less than granting every indigent, but imprudently ambitious, and aspiring man,—the tolerated; for it is so morally wrong, that I will not call it the lawful means;—the permission then, to raise up out of nothing, but an unnatural and abused credit, a seeming capital, on which to set up for a man of affluence, and extensive business, and which when crowned, and completed by a suddenly expensive, and luxurious style of living, will never fail to bring on these frequent occurrences of bankruptcy, decay of trade, and interruption of employment, from all which, inevitably follow the distresses of which we have been treating.

The local note system, I say, generates insolvency with a power so prolific, as cannot be, and as never was equalled by any other set of circumstances, for first it tempts the issuer thereof in order to extend the realizing of interest from a nonentity, to supply men with seeming capital, who were never in fit circumstances to have had any, and that for speculative and vague purposes; and who by any capacity, or efforts of their own, would never have been able to have acquired any, or to have lifted themselves from out of that

* Some ludicrous instances of this might be specified.

million mass, which never entertains any such thought, as that of aspiring to any.

For instance, an insignificant manufacturer, probably already insolvent, grows by little and little imprudent, and daring enough, to erect for the purpose of putting to experiment, some sanguine theory; a most extensive factory building, he must have five, or perhaps ten thousand pounds for this design; he offers his paper note banker, security on the premises, and building which he is aiming to erect; this is deemed a solid, adviseable transaction, in which there can be no risk for the banker, for there is good security tendered: why refuse to advance the notes, they cost next to nothing, and will produce five per cent. to the lender, and advance greatly the interest of both parties: both borrower and lender in the mean while, live, *(as they have a right to do)* as men of some wealth and capital.

A panic suddenly sweeps over the land; the notes pour in like a hail shower, upon the banker, to be exchanged for sovereigns: he never received any thing tangible for them, and has little to take them up with; he stops payment, and failing, his assignees presently require reimbursement from the factory owner on account of his debt and mortgage; he has nothing but his mill to show for them, no money can now be raised upon it, at a second place, at all; he too stops payment, and surrenders his property to be sold, for perhaps half its original cost, and thus all sides go to destruc-

tion and poverty, as a matter of course; but they had both shone very bright for a while, had swelled and thriven, till smitten, (what a pity) by the blast of the panic, and of such, was in a great measure made up the late "unexampled prosperity."

No man formerly, (fifty years ago, and less than that) could rise otherwise than gradually, into extensive capital, and a superior scale of business: it is the part of wholesome government to keep every thing in commerce, but solid transactions under restrictions: it did this, till the æra of the Bank Restriction Act, that is, till the year 1797, by suppressing paper money, and of course bubble companies; and in those times, an extensive commercial business, carried on by a number of partners, or by a single individual, was identical with a corresponding strength of capital, and with an equivalent extent of solid wealth: the exact reverse has been exhibited in our late paper money times, and has been accompanied with consequences, most meetly correspondent, and appropriate.

But to return to the situation of the operatives. A stranger to the country, if he saw these demonstrations of uncommon distress produced hereby, and these fearful tumults resulting therefrom, the moment that the manufacturers of England are out of employ: would naturally ask, at what unjust, and unfair rate of wages have these men been worked? That it should have been so utterly out of their power to set apart any thing

for their sustentation, during an unfavourable change taking place in their occupations, for ever so short a time: what scanty remuneration have they been obliged to exchange their toil, and their industry for, that this should be their immediate condition, the instant that their employment receives the least check? How surprised would he then be, to be told, that these men have earned, and obtained more money, and more money's worth on an average, as the recompense and return for their endeavours, than any other class of men that live by labour; and that surprise might be still further heightened, by being told, that those who generally acquire the highest earnings, are found afterwards to be those who undergo in times of reverse, and want of work, the severest privations, and the greatest degree of distress.

The operatives in manufacturing, I have said, earn on an average, some 20s.; some 25s.; some 30s.; some 35s. a week; no doubt there are many inferior hands, who never reach any of these amounts: but we will beg to lay these out of the question for a while, because in a discussion of this kind, we cannot descend to particular cases, but must speak of the bulk, otherwise there are families, whom the writer knows, who live near him, consisting of an able bodied father, with a couple of up-grown sons, and two or more younger children, who, as has been already stated, can make four pounds, in many instances four pounds ten shillings a week, *and have done it* for the last

four, or five years, to the very day on which they turned out for higher wages, last summer; a family of this exact description, which lives at very little distance from the writer, has undergone more want than any other family that has come under his observation: the father is in the Infirmary, occasioned not unlikely by a revulsion, from vulgar luxury, and repletions, to want and starvation: the oldest son is lately liberated from the house of correction, having served his three months at the tread-mill, for being no longer able to discharge his bastardy score with the parish, and the rest of the family are suffering in some similar degree. Another family whose earnings have not been quite so much, has, by an opposite line of conduct, accumulated, during the same space of time, about a couple of hundred pounds.

Let us, then, forgetting the two last, and all such cases, take the average of the four first numbers, which gives 27s. 6d. a week for the wages of an able-bodied spinner, weaver, or raiser of blankets, or other description of woollens. Weavers, however, let it be granted, are said not to get quite so much, therefore, to make any concession that can be desired, we will put this average at 25s. a week, instead of 27s. 6d. And we will next allow, which is pretty near the fact, that such workman is one-sixth part of his time out of employment—for there is sometimes sickness, casualties, &c.—this will necessarily require such

proportion of 25s. to be deducted and withdrawn from the ratio of his earnings, which subduction will leave him 20s. 10d, a week, which if he is resolved to accumulate and save nothing *ultimately*, he may consider himself (still, I think, with the exception of such seasons of sickness or bad accidents) fairly entitled to spend, without incurring the disgrace and danger of having to subsist one-sixth part of his time, on subscriptions, or parish rates; nor do I hesitate to add, that if, instead of 20s. 10d. a week, he had had ten shillings a week, with a more assured regularity, he would have been, in nine instances out of ten, brought up with habits, that would have ensured to him a never-failing competency.

The servants in agriculture earn, some of them 9s., some 12s., and some 15s. per week; there may be particular cases, lower or higher, on both sides of the enumeration, but we cannot do fairer than take them at 12s. a week on an average.* We never hear of these paroxysms of distress and outrage amongst them; they live, and rise up from childhood, to manhood, and lead their lives, in comparative comfort, and quiet. What can be the reason of this? Their means for support fall strikingly short of those of the distressed manufacturing artisan, whether in woollen, or cotton. But the reason is plain and

* Since writing the above, I have met with some information that inclines me to think that this average is now somewhat too high for servants in agriculture.

obvious: the habits of the one, are those of economy and steadiness; those of the other are made up of costly indulgences, of constant scenes of drinking—perhaps not to the extent always, or even often, of disqualifying intoxication, but of that repeated unnecessary drinking, and vulgarly luxurious expensive eating and living, that form their boast of doing in that respect almost as well, or better, than folks of a little estate. This is the vaunt so often heard among their foolish mates. This consumes every penny of their large comings in. While the tide of trade flows briskly the work seems constant, its pay is high, and no calculations are made in expenditure, no self-denial, so much as thought of, yet all saving almost, is the fruit of self-denial, especially, all beginnings to save; and such saving, three times out of four, is found the first foundation of extensive wealth, even, no provision is deemed at all necessary for a time of failing employment; the week consumes its productions; and should it so happen, that any one of better, more moral, and more prudent turn of mind, intimates any impropriety or risk in all this; it is considered, as meant only by way of insult; and when a sudden change, and with it a reverse in circumstances overtakes such people; they are then found to have nourished habits and dispositions which suit not at all with their real state, and condition, and they are then plunged instantly in the utmost extremity of distress: we see what outrages immediately fol-

low; and these are the alternations in which low extravagance, senseless imprudence, and blind thoughtlessness, pass their days in this changeful world; in which one of the best moralists that ever wrote, has said, long before paper money times had arrived, that "there is no prosperity without a reverse;" "no soil in which the seeds of alteration are not every where sown." Change and alteration are most particularly, indeed, interwoven in the affairs, upon which these people are dependent, so that they seem the least capable of all others of sustaining the consequences of imprudence, and yet practise nothing else.

If the great question then be how to save them from distress? that question is nothing else, than how to render them more prudent! And the first, and assuredly the principal, step towards that is to deprive them, *when next again in work and prosperity*, of all expectations hereafter, founded on the poor's rates. For while the supposition of that resource remains, all other measures are as chaff, or as the wind that is passing by; and in vain you load them with money from generous subscriptions, it serves but to increase their leanings towards mendicity, and to aggravate the imprudent waywardness of their minds.

Lord Liverpool, with an air ever sombre, and dull, indeed, but which was meant to convey an impression of great nicety, and sagacity in making a distinction, put his decided negative on all propositions for sending sums of money, drawn from

the regular revenue of the state, to the seats of manufacturing distress; his expression was, "from the public purse;" but, in the same breath, joined in thanking God, that "there were the poor's rates for them to resort to." May I be allowed to to ask, out of what purse are the poor's rates drawn? It was always supposed that they formed a public parish purse! and of what articles are kingdoms made up and composed? Of parishes and townships I take it. But the mass of the poor's rates are not raised from the pockets of men of wealth. So much the worse for the statesman's argument, or rather his feelings; for too great a mass of the poor's rates are wrung from the straitened circumstances and impoverished fare of hard working prudence! Still the principle of the grant is in its effects precisely the same! It would, according to Lord Liverpool, be a strikingly bad precedent, to suffer the utmost extreme of distress to invade the "general public purse." The growing consequences of such an example cannot be contemplated without dismay! Right, my Lord, correctly are you right! The feeling, and the apprehension have the most assured and authorised sanction of discretion, of virtue! of good sense; a never-ceasing augmentation of increased applications would be the infallible result. Gone from that time, for ever hereafter, would be all but the ghost of the national revenue, if your Lordship had acceded to that suggestion; that revenue would from henceforward

have been converted into one great, general poor's rate. But does not his Lordship see (he cannot do otherwise), that that part of the public purse, consisting of the parish poor's rates, has been conceded on the same principle of application, and that these rates have the same effect on the property and condition of the middle and lower ranks, which are weighed down by being subjected to their never-ceasing increase, and growth? yet his Lordship, the prime minister, and in his place as a legislator, of England, recommends these unhappy levies, to the cherishing and nourishing of these battalions of extravagance, of thoughtlessness, and all the multiplied qualities which form the exclusive possession of the pauper class.

If his Lordship would condescend to look upon, and to weigh this contrast, he would certainly find, that even here, that greatest, strongest argument, against the policy of the poor's rates and pauper system, viz. their tendency to increase; was the involuntary feeling that checked his Lordship as regarded "the public purse," would to God that he only felt as much for one description of revenue as for another; yet to injure ourselves, and to injure others, should not create a different feeling with us, if possible.

But I am desirous to finish this subject, and in doing so, I will content myself with only just hinting, at the *ill-timed* concession, made to this distress of the present times, in yielding both the

measures respecting the corn, and in beginning the subscriptions, as soon as ever the sons of the factory system, began their operations on their master's looms and machinery, and *not before.* If it once becomes a habit to yield points, carrying a bad policy in their train, to insurrections and outrages, what is the rest of the community but a conquered country? subdued by the physical force of pauperism. Many an unthinking politician will say, Aye, but refuse them support from the poor's rates, and will you not have an insurrection? The strongest reason that, of all others, if it does exist; I answer, why *they* ought to be refused. Is England, I repeat, to be a country subjugated by the dread of paupers? and the fear of what they may be inclined to do, in defence of an indirect public robbery, for such, when bestowed on able-bodied paupers, and workmen, are the poor's rates. If that is to be the case, there is, indeed, an end of property, and security in property, for the middle ranks in England at least.

Wishing these considerations to have their due weight with the advocates for the Poor Laws, and with generous, but deceived subscribers to manufacturing distress also; I beg leave to finish with recommending them to their notice, at least, before they subscribe and commit themselves in this way again!

June 30th, 1826.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the foregoing was written, I find in the Leeds Mercury, of Saturday, the 1st of July, in an account of what passed "at a public meeting" at Leeds, held for the relief of the unemployed poor; the following sentiments on that subject, in a speech attributed to a resident barrister at law, who is made to say—"He had offered employment in his own township, and was surprised to find that so few applied for it, as well as that a great number of those who did apply were Irishmen. He thought that if the distress continued, some more effectual mode of relief should be devised."

I will just stop here to notice this kind of reasoning, for it appears to me very inconclusive; that where employment has been freely offered to people out of work, and the surprise is, that so few apply for it, that it should follow, that there exists a great necessity for devising other means for such peoples' relief, than subscriptions, unequalled in point of generosity, and in liberality of amount; it seems to prove to my mind on the contrary, (but I really don't wish to know much on such a subject) that the subscriptions are at *least for the present*, equal to these people's wants and support, and I think we may give them credit for not troubling their heads much about the future. He proceeds—

"The Poor Laws of this country—and God

forbid they should ever be abolished, as he was convinced, that no other system could be adopted to save the poor from starvation—wanted nothing but enforcing *with proper rigour* to afford perfect relief. But at the present, the Poor Laws were not adequate to the great distress: (contradictory again :) from the insufficiency of the sum raised. "*Some expedient ought to be adopted to raise a larger sum:* and none suggested itself to him, so likely, as transferring the burthen from the occupier to the owner of the land, and making it a real property tax, nay, however unpleasant it might be, he believed they would be obliged to levy a similar tax on the funds. He was much afraid they might foresee a condition of the poor, when such a measure would become necessary."

Here we have before us traced, the description of the genuine progress, that pauperism is unceasingly making; this is the exact picture of it, so frequently drawn by Dr. Chalmers, and in the reports of the committees of the legislature, and elsewhere; the effects of the ever-living expectation of parish support is continually thus widening its spread, and threatening to absorb every source of support and supply.

The learned gentleman, although he has time to support in this way, what he deems so excellent a system, does not seem, ever I take it, to have had leisure to receive one idea on the subject, from the reports of the committees above alluded to, or from the still more profound discussions of

such men as Mr. Malthus, Dr. Chalmers, &c. though I believe Dr. Chalmers has visited Leeds, has held consultations, and made inquiries among some of the principal people and townsmen there, on the increase, and evil of the Poor Laws system, and at the time one thought to good purpose seemingly. The gentleman above alluded to, is known to be a good and benevolent man; but this is sad infatuation, and if such persuasions are suffered to prevail, and if it is possible they should be in any degree acted upon, Lord Liverpool may prepare to open wide his treasury doors, and new pave or macadamize the way to the "public purse," for it will soon be all wanted for the barrister's "new expedients," and when that is done, I will venture to predict to him, that the deliverance of these people from distress, will be as distant and unaccomplished as ever, even when he has raised for them the property tax, which he looks to, and has added to it the supply from the similar tax, which he proposes on the funds; he will then find, (to use the langnage of Dr. Chalmers I believe) "that he has only acquired for his pains, a mortifying increase of broiling discontent, and unappeased clamour, and of actual unrelieved poverty," importunately complaining of inadequate support.

Good God! it is high time that some one better qualified to resist this deception stood forward, than what is attempted to be done, by the feeble effort, of this little tract; for if this torrent of mad-

ness is not stemmed—is not obstructed—it will not be long ere it has consumed every vestige of comfort, and wealth, in the manufacturing departments of the realm, and perhaps in all others; the march of this evil if not stopped, will soon intercept and dry up the very sources of the public revenue itself, as well as the peculiar means, and resources of individuals. These expedients I can tell the Barrister, will create a new, and *numerous* class of paupers, most undeserving of their calamity, who have had the rates to pay, without removing one iota of the old distress, which he is thinking of; for (again to quote Dr. Chalmers) "the recipients will ever multiply, without any other limitation, and without any other impulse than the revenue of the institution!

And if the incomes of private families are to be arrested and diverted from their usual course of support, to the maintenance of thousands and millions of unthinking, unproviding, able-bodied paupers; Lord Liverpool will quickly find such a deficiency in "the public purse," such a vacuum in the revenue as will make his hair stand on end. Good God deliver us!

"O misiri, quæ tanta insania, cives?
"Durate, et vosmet rebus servate secundis."

July, 1826.

FINIS.

E. BAINES, PRINTER, LEEDS.

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT,

ON THE

e

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COLONIAL DEPARTMENT,

IN FURTHERANCE OF THE

RESOLUTIONS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF THE 15th MAY 1823,

"*For Ameliorating the Condition of the Slave Population in His Majesty's Colonies;*"

AND ON THE

ONLY COURSE THAT OUGHT NOW TO BE PURSUED BY HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1826.

W. WILSON, PRINTER, 57, SKINNER-STREET, LONDON.

Among the subjects which will engage your early attention, there is not one of paramount importance to "the West Indian question," of which Mr. Canning has said:—"To speak of the difficulties "which encompass it, as compared with almost any "other question which has *ever* occupied the atten- "tion of parliament, would be to draw but a faint "and feeble picture of those difficulties; they are, "indeed, apparent to the most casual observation; "but he who has to probe and prove them, for the "purpose of applying a remedy, finds them thicken- "ing around him at every step, and leaving him fre- "quently nothing but a choice of evils." With such a description, by a statesman so eminent as Mr. Canning, I hope I shall stand excused for submitting to your notice a brief explanation and impartial review of the proceedings of the Colonial Department in Downing-Street, in furtherance of the resolutions of the House of Commons, of the 15th May 1823*,

* 1st. "That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive mea- "sures for ameliorating the condition of the slave population in his "Majesty's colonies.

2d. "That through a determined and persevering, but at the same "time judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this "House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character "of the slave population, such as may prepare them for a participa- "tion in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other "classes of his Majesty's subjects.

3d. "That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this "purpose, at the earliest period that shall be compatible with the "well-being of the slaves themselves, with the safety of the colonies, "and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of pri- "vate property."

with observations on the only course *now* open to you, "compatible with the well-being of the slaves "themselves, with the safety of the colonies, and "with a fair and equitable consideration of the in-"terests of private property."

You will find on your tables "Papers in explana-"tion of the measures adopted by his Majesty's "government for the amelioration of the condition of "the slave population in his Majesty's dominions in "the West Indies:" to these "papers", I have to solicit your particular attention. The anti-slavery and West India parties have both expressed their dissatisfaction with them, but for very opposite reasons—the one complains of his Majesty's government for having proceeded too slowly, while the other objects to the rapidity of the movements: that both complaints should be well founded may appear paradoxical, yet it will probably be seen that neither is without foundation, and that by moving more slowly the progress might have been greater.

The question is avowedly encompassed by difficulties, and therefore it might have been expected that the most deliberate investigation would have preceded any attempt at legislation. This question, however, which Mr. Canning thought "great and "difficult beyond example; one almost beyond the "power of man," "the recasting as it were, of a "whole generation of mankind," was undertaken by the Colonial Department, to which it more especially belonged, with an apparent innocence of all consciousness of its importance or difficulty. Earl Bathurst did not deem it necessary to "probe and prove," and therefore avoided the misfortune of finding difficulties "thickening around him at every step." His lordship went to work as if he had been dealing with a common-place every-day question. On the 28th of May 1823, not a fortnight after the resolutions of the House of Commons, Lord Bathurst made his first communication to the colonies by furnishing each governor with a copy of the resolutions of the House

of Commons, and the "best report" his lordship could procure of Mr. Canning's speech on proposing the resolutions. He announced two of the measures on which his Majesty's government had determined: the governor of Demerara was requested to submit them to the Court of Policy for adoption, to render his Majesty's commands unnecessary: those other colonies which had not* independent local legislatures were informed that they must be enforced, and the governors of colonies having independent local legislatures were instructed to recommend similar measures to the respective legislatures. In another fortnight (12th June 1823) Lord Bathurst again addressed the governors of colonies *having local legislatures*, and said, "I am not as yet prepared to communicate to you the definitive *instructions* which "his Majesty's government *will issue*, with respect "to the immediate measures for the improvement of "the condition of the slave population necessary to "be *enforced* by the colonial legislatures at their *next* "meeting." In less than a month thereafter (9th July 1823), and within two months of the passing of the resolutions of the House of Commons, Lord Bathurst again addressed these governors, the governors of colonies HAVING LOCAL LEGISLATURES, in a circular occupying six printed folio pages, and detailing the measures to be adopted. His lordship writes, "the suggestions which I am about to make are *not* "to be understood as affording a full development of "what his Majesty's government have in contempla-

* "The Colonies are divided into two classes; one of which "(the smaller number †) are governed by the crown, without the "intervention of local legislative assemblies; the other, and larger "class, have legislative assemblies framed in miniature, after the "model of those of the mother country. As such assemblies are "not a little jealous of the rights and privileges by the possession "of which they resemble the institutions of the parent state, the "colonies of the first class are much more easily manageable."

Mr. Canning.

† Demerara, Berbice, Trinidad, and St. Lucia.

"tion on this important subject; it is my purpose "rather to point out such changes in the laws as may "be conveniently adopted at present."—"You will "be attentive to have the necessary laws framed, "with such precaution and foresight as, if possible, "to provide an effectual security for the faithful ob- "servance of them. To this end you will consult "with the legal advisers of the crown, on the frame "of the necessary bills, and you will, from time to "time, communicate with me upon the progress you "make in this work, or on the difficulties which may "obstruct its completion, and if (what I am unwil- "ling to imagine) you should meet with any serious "opposition, you will lose no time in transmitting to "me the necessary communication, in order that *I* "*may take the earliest opportunity of laying the* "*matter before parliament, and submitting to their* "*consideration such measures as it may be fit to* "*adopt in consequence.*" A copy of this circular was transmitted to each of the colonies not having independent local legislatures. The governors of Demerara and Berbice were to submit the measures to the courts in these colonies, to be applied in the way best suited to the "existing laws and usages," preserving the entire spirit. The governors of Trinidad and St. Lucia were informed that orders in council would be prepared for their islands. Accordingly, on the 25th of March 1824, Lord Bathurst forwarded to the governor of Trinidad an order in council for that island, consisting of forty-three clauses, filling fifteen pages of the folio printed papers on your tables, and involving in its "enactments obligations affecting the "most ordinary transactions of life." The governor was enjoined to proclaim the order as soon as received, to be in operation in one month from the date of the proclamation. A copy of this order in council was transmitted to each of the other governors of colonies not having local legislatures, to be adapted to the laws of these colonies. The governors of colonies having independent legislatures were at the same

time furnished with copies, and Lord Bathurst expressed the expectation of his Majesty's government that the provisions thereof would be adopted, and his lordship appeared to wish it to be understood that the "order in council" contained the "whole "of the measures which his Majesty's government "had in contemplation for the amelioration of the "state of the slave population."

Having introduced the "Order in Council," it is proper that I should give some account of it. When the governor of Trinidad received it he informed Lord Bathurst that he was "both ready and "willing to promote his Majesty's service to the "utmost of his power," but that many parts of the order were of such "doubtful interpretation," that he would require explanations. The "order," however, was proclaimed on the 24th of May 1824, but in two days the governor was obliged to apply to Lord Bathurst for further information. On the 3d of June the governor was compelled to address Lord Bathurst a third time on points requiring explanation or alteration. When his lordship's explanations of the first objections started by the governor were received, they were so incomplete and unsatisfactory that the governor was under the necessity of pressing for further explanations and alterations. Indeed, so early as September, (almost as soon as the commencement of the operation of the "order" could be known in this country), Lord Bathurst was obliged to have recourse to another "order in council," to "remove doubts and to meet difficulties," as his lordship expresses himself to the governor. In the same month the chief judge of the island felt so much perplexed and embarrassed by the ambiguous wording and apparent inconsistencies of the order in council, that he addressed the governor on the subject, but the governor could afford no relief or assistance! As a specimen of the legislation of the order in council, I shall adduce some correspondence on one clause, namely, the forty-second. The governor's letter to Lord

Bathurst, of the 7th May, says, "The forty-second "clause, however, is that which has really created "great consternation, as it confiscates to the crown "all the slaves of any person, twice convicted of in- "flicting upon any slave, *any cruel* OR *unlawful* "punishment under the 'order,' to the prejudice of "his family, and without reservation in favour of his "creditors, and when your lordship considers that "persons are now for the first time forbidden to "strike any female slave, that this class is allowed by "all to be the most prone to give offence, and that it "will become even more difficult than at present to "restrain them, from their knowledge that their "masters cannot punish them, as he was accustomed "to do, your lordship will, I think, be disposed to "make *some allowance for the infirmities of human* "*nature, and at least save the family of the offender,* "from that ruin which might fall on them in conse- "quence of an intemperate action of his own." In a subsequent letter he says, of the forty-second clause, "The whole population are unanimous in their com- "plaint against the severity of it." Lord Bathurst replies, "The forfeiture of slaves upon a second con- "viction for an *unlawful* punishment is, EXPRESSLY "left to the '*discretion of the court,*' and there- "fore would not be enforced except in extreme "cases. It is also to be observed that the for- "feiture is to the benefit of the crown, and therefore "would not be enforced unless the offence were of "a very grave and serious character. In order, "however, to allay an apprehension which may be "entertained of a harsh exercise of this enactment, "I have to direct that the penalty on the second con- "viction shall never be enforced until the whole "case has been referred home for the consideration "of his Majesty." The following is the rejoinder of the governor, on finding that his lordship had not paid him the compliment of even reading the clause complained of! "I humbly beg leave to observe, "that the discretion vested in the court, *to which*

"*your lordship adverts, is confined to the first offence,* "*and that for the second the forfeiture of* ALL *the* "*slaves of any unfortunate offender is declared* AB- "SOLUTE." That his lordship might be without any means of escape the chief judge of the island says, "Neither is the right of prosecution for enforcement "of the penalty limited to the crown prosecutor. By "the express letter of the law it is competent to any "individual in the community to institute such a pro- "secution, and the judgment for the penalty and for- "feiture in case of a second offence must follow the "conviction under the law, and as by the order in "council of the 16th September 1822, *no appeal is* "*admissible in criminal cases,* except in cases of "condemnation to death, I am at a loss to ascertain "by what means the judgment can be reserved or "suspended, at least as far as the penalty extends." Well might Mr. Brougham exclaim, in his spirited work on colonial policy, "any parliament, council, "or senate, which should begin such a work (legis- "lating for colonies) would find it necessary to give "up legislating for the mother country, in order "partly to mar and partly to neglect the legislation "of the colonies. Let this branch of the imperial "administration, then, be left to the care of those "who are themselves most immediately interested in "the good order and government of those distant "provinces, and whose knowledge of local circum- "stances (*of things which cannot be written down in* "*reports, nor told by witnesses*), is more full and "practical."

The inconvenience and injustice of such legisla- tion have been well expressed by the inhabitants of Trinidad, in a memorial to the governor: they say, "Your memorialists humbly contend that they "are placed in singular and extraordinary circum- "stances, without precedent in the annals of legisla- "tion for British subjects: laws for their govern- "ment are universally understood to be framed by "their representatives, whose properties and persons

" they are to affect equally with the rest of the com-
" munity. Such laws are called for by the previous
" necessity of the case; their want has been felt;
" their meaning and intention understood previous
" to promulgation, and should an occasional error
" creep into the wording or expression of such mean-
" ing, it can be discovered and remedied on the spot
" without delay."

The Court of Policy, in Demerara, had evinced such a strong desire to meet the wishes of his Majesty's government, that Lord Bathurst felt himself called upon to declare that "they had done "themselves much honour," and that they had "his "Majesty's approbation for their zeal and assiduity "manifested in giving effect to his royal intentions, "and the wishes of parliament in favour of the slave "population." Yet with all this zeal, of the sincerity of which there are abundant proofs in the papers on your tables, the court found it to be impossible to reconcile some of the provisions of the order in council to the laws and usages of Demerara. For instance, by the Spanish law, which is the law of Trinidad, a slave has a right to purchase his freedom against the consent of his master; the Trinidad order in council is framed accordingly; but when the Court of Policy in Demerara were requested to originate a similar law, they at once said it was beyond their power; that they had not the right to invade the property of their fellow colonists by admitting that they could be in any manner deprived of it contrary to the law by which it was secured to them, and which his Majesty had been graciously pleased to guaranty by the articles of capitulation on which the colony had surrendered to his Majesty's arms; that the difference between the Spanish law in Trinidad and the Dutch law in Demerara was great; that the Trinidad order in council had not affected the principle of the Spanish law, which allowed a slave to enfranchise himself by purchase, whereas the Dutch law gave no such right, the interest of an

owner in his slave being that of fee simple absolute, whilst the purchaser of a slave in Trinidad knew beforehand that he could only acquire a precarious title depending on the ability of the slave to purchase, but that, in short, let the Spanish law be what it might, it could never alter the right of property in Demerara. After thus contending for the rights of the slave-owner, the court pointed out some of the ruinous effects which might be anticipated from such an alteration of the law, as the non-importation of slaves would render it impossible to replace those manumitted. Lord Bathurst replied, that "the arguments of the Court of Policy had received all the consideration which their importance deserved, but that his lordship did not consider that they were such as would justify the abandonment of the principle which led to the recommendation of that particular enactment. The Court rejoined, that it would not be respectful to his Majesty's government to enter into a discussion with Earl Bathurst, but that with all deference, the opinion of the Court remained unshaken, and therefore that the Court could not conscientiously proceed farther, notwithstanding an anxious wish to meet to the fullest extent the wishes of his Majesty's government. This respectful representation his lordship answered on the 25th Feb. last, like a soldier who had received orders which he was to execute, leaving responsibility of consequences to those from whom his orders were derived. "I now, *for* "*the last time*, bring these regulations under the con- "sideration of the Court, with no other alternative, in "the event of their declining to admit them, than that "of my humbly submitting to his Majesty the expe- "diency of exacting them by direct royal authority." It is clear that the noble Secretary considers the execution of what he intimates to be within his orders. I beg, however, to suggest to his lordship, that even a Military officer is not entirely free from responsibility; that before he gives the word "fire," against

his countrymen, he ought to be satisfied that he is not acting under questionable authority; that he knows the true import of the commands he has received, and that he is justified by the necessity of the case. If the last position be not apparent, the legal acquittal of a court martial, on the score of not having exceeded orders, would not screen him from public condemnation. Let us apply a similar test to his lordship's proceedings, and see whether he will be entitled to a general acquittal.

In his lordship's despatches, he pleads the authority of "parliament," the recommendations of the "principal planters resident in this country," and the "general approbation of the country." Does one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state call resolutions of the House of Commons the sanction of parliament? To the House of Lords the resolutions were not submitted until the 7th of March last, when the Lord Chancellor said, "Now, with regard to the "communicating to your lordships these resolutions, "at so late a period after their being passed elsewhere, I will take the liberty of saying, that I "cannot help thinking it would be an infinitely "better plan to go upon generally, that when either "house of parliament adopts resolutions or measures "of an *important character, affecting great political* "*or* PRIVATE RIGHTS, it should *forthwith* communicate "such measures or resolutions to the other house of "parliament." Here is the highest law authority of the kingdom against his lordship; but, without dwelling upon what some may think a matter of form, I maintain that it would have been equally incorrect to have asserted that his lordship's measures had the approbation even of the House of Commons, as the resolutions of that house could not be tortured into an approbation of enactments not then framed! With respect to the recommendations of the "principal "planters resident in this country," his lordship is equally unfortunate, for they disavow any such sweep-

ing recommendations as are ascribed to them, never having hinted a single measure approximating to that which has been designated "compulsory manumission;" and any recommendation of interference with the local legislatures they totally disclaim. As to the opinion of the country, it is obvious that, as no evidence was before the country, there could be no opinion sufficiently strong to sanction the act of a secretary of state.

A little consideration will suffice to shew that what his lordship has been pleased to denominate the "general approbation of the country," he ought to have held in the same estimation as a verdict that he knew had been obtained on false evidence. The excitement spread throughout the country was produced by a party that had avowed by their organ that they could do any thing with government * "by saving "them the trouble of thinking;" and what could be a more powerful auxiliary to the views of that party than raising an excitement to make it appear that the country was on their side. To some of the means employed, I beg to crave your attention. Persons residing in the West Indies were invited to furnish information; and, to remove all restraint, it was proclaimed, through the Edinburgh Review and other publications, that secrecy should be observed. The publishers of the Edinburgh Review, the African Institution, and the secretary, Mr. Macaulay, were all declared to be willing to receive communications on such terms: as might be expected, these three open mouths (like those of Venice) were soon most plentifully supplied. Whilst the appetites were fresh, nothing came amiss. The public was served with some strange dishes. Imaginary dialogues, which had appeared in a Barbadoes newspaper forty years

* "I have no doubt that Government will be disposed to adopt "almost any plan which we may propose to them, with respect to "Africa, *provided we will but save them the trouble of thinking.* "This you will see to be highly important."—*Mr. Macaulay to the Duke of Gloucester.*

ago, were presented as *real and new*. The tenth report of the African Institution contained an account of a female slave barbarously treated, during her pregnancy, by an aid-de-camp of Sir James Leith, which was said to be such a common occurrence, that the grand jury would not entertain a bill against him for cruelty. This was in the character of the Barbadoes newspaper fictions, and probably proceeded from a lively imagination inflamed by the heat of the climate; but Sir James Leith being only a plain soldier, had no relish for such wit, and denounced the fiction "a calumny without a shadow of foundation," got up by "some incorrigible dupe or unconscion-"able knave." A British judge and jury were asked their opinion, and, strange to say, they proved to be as devoid of taste as Sir James Leith. The judge said it was "a wicked calumny," which had "origi-"nated in wilful and wicked fabrication;" and the verdict of the jury spoke no less intelligibly. As these opinions did not evince a sufficient sense of the author's merit, he did not court publicity, by claiming the honours of authorship; and the three mouths required so much food, that they did not venture to run the risk of having any part of their future supplies cut off by disclosing even one of the channels from whence they derived their sustenance. Their prudence was rewarded, for so far from being in danger of famine, they had more to fear from repletion. They were in danger of losing their lives, as many children in the West Indies have done, from over-feeding. The three mouths kept the public constantly supplied with dishes adapted to every taste*. The reputed crimes of half a century were fresh dressed, and palmed upon the public as new. The colonists were described as "unrelentingly cruel;" a

* "I need not dwell on the temper and colour of this document† "of Messrs. Wray and others, manufactured, as it appears, in "England."—*Governor of Berbice to Lord Bathurst.*

† A Description of the State of Berbice, furnished by the Rev. Mr. Wray and others in Berbice, to Mr. Macaulay.

"white mob, white oppressors," and "white savages;" persons to whom the "foulest exhalations" of a slave-ship were "fragrance," and the "deepest groans music;" persons who counted their profits "per poll "in the West Indian shambles;" persons whose laws were "expressed in the language of insult, and "in characters of blood." With such descriptions, by individuals holding a respectable rank in society, it is not surprising that the Edinburgh Review should have looked forward as it did to the destruction of the "white savages" with rejoicing *. The religious and political feelings of the country were worked on by the declaration that the "state of "slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British "constitution †, and of the Christian religion." In short, every engine was employed to rouse the people to an universal expression of abhorrence of every thing bearing the name of slavery. The "impor-"tant engine ‡," once in motion, soon manufactured petitions for every part of the country, and the tables of both houses of parliament were loaded with them. So far from dignifying the feeling produced by such unworthy means as the opinion of the country, Lord Bathurst ought to have said to the petitioners,

* "If the work is not done, the negroes will do it themselves, "and the *bulk* of their fellow subjects will *rejoice* that it is done, *how-*"*ever deplorable the consequence may be.*"—*Edinburgh Review.*

† "With respect to a state of slavery being contrary to the "spirit of the British constitution, I must say, my lords, that when "I find this system was fostered, encouraged, and almost instituted "by the British Constitution, and I might add under the auspices too "of so great a constitutional authority as my Lord Somers, I should "hesitate a long while before I ventured to say that slavery was con-"trary to the genius of the British constitution."—*Lord Chancellor's Speech, House of Lords.*

‡ "A word in private respecting the African Institution. I can-"not help regarding it as an *important engine.* We have many "zealous friends in it, high in rank and influence. Indeed, in all the "OSTENSIBLE letters you write, whether to Lord Castlereagh, the "African Institution, or myself, it will be right to consider the *effect* "of what you say on luke-warm friends, and in the hands of secret "enemies, for such will unavoidably mix with us."—*Private Letter from Mr. Macaulay to T. Ludlam, Esq.*

" that he had great pleasure in assuring them that
" the statements to which their petitions owed their
" origin were gross exaggerations; that he was fully
" justified in giving this assurance by the information
" derived from those most entitled to credit—namely,
" the men of high rank and honour who had acted as
" governors, or held military and naval commands;
" that the depravity of human nature was, however,
" too deeply implanted to permit him to expect that a
" passage across the Atlantic should change the very
" nature of his countrymen, and free them from all
" imperfection on landing in the West Indies, and
" therefore there might be amongst them persons of
" vitiated taste, to whose olfactory nerves 'the foul-
" est exhalations' might be 'fragrance,' and to whom
" the 'deepest groans' might be sublime 'music,'
" but that, when such persons might attempt to gra-
" tify their tastes at the expense of the negroes, every
" endeavour should be used to bring them to punish-
" ment to the utmost extent of the law, and that, if
" the laws did not authorize punishment proportioned
" to the offence, such representations should be made
" to the local legislatures as could not fail to effect
" the necessary alterations in the laws. Nay, further,
" that his lordship should institute an investigation
" of the colonial codes generally, and point out the
" changes which might be safely and wisely in-
" troduced, but that the whole fabric of colonial
" society rested on a foundation so different from that
" of the mother country, that the greatest delicacy
" and circumspection would be necessary; that what
" might be theoretically unjust, might be practically
" indispensable; and, indeed, that the fullest in-
" formation that could reach this country must be
" imperfect, compared with that possessed by the
" colonists, which was more than could be 'written
" down in reports,' or 'told by witnesses.' That
" many of the laws in the colonies, as well as in this
" country, might be expressed in characters of blood,
" but that it did not follow that they were executed in

" the spirit of 'blood.' That were the character of " this country to be judged by some of its laws, " Englishmen would be held in abhorrence, and as in " a state of gross barbarism; that the petitioners " might be assured that the barbarous laws, and the " practice of the country, did not differ more in " England than in the colonies; yet, that as it was fit " that laws inapplicable to the present state of society " should be repealed, his lordship could not doubt that " the local legislatures would cheerfully undertake " the task, indeed that several of them were actually " employed in revising their slave codes; that the " petitioners ought to be reminded, that every law " now in force in the colonies, had received the " sanction of the king through responsible ministers. " That, with regard to slavery being repugnant to the " principles of the Christian religion, it was a bold " assertion in the face of the fact that the Christian " religion and slavery 'had co-existed from the very " dawn of Christianity to the present day.' That " the petitioners ought to take care not to attempt to " destroy what they might think contrary to the Chris- " tian religion in a way not consonant to that religion; " that they must take care not to condemn their " brethren on false or doubtful testimony; and, above " all, that they must take care not to give a death- " blow to the 'spirit of the British constitution,' by " trifling with rights guaranteed with all the solemnity " of which that constitution was susceptible." His lordship might have added, that, before the petitioners could even speak of emancipation, they ought to provide an ample fund to indemnify the planters.

I trust I have succeeded in establishing that Lord Bathurst was not justified in claiming for his measures the authority of parliament, the country, or the principal planters resident in this country.

I now invite your particular attention to his lordship's instructions. Mr. Canning has embodied them in the following sentences:—" His Majesty's ministers should consider not only what may be right in

theory but what will be wise in practice; not only how to do the greatest possible good, but how to do it with the least possible mischief." He points out the planters as the only persons through whose instrumentality the good can be effected*. The object and manner of accomplishing it are here laid down, and ought to be borne in mind throughout the examination of the conduct of the Colonial Department. It is impossible to do justice to Lord Bathurst without reverting to the situation and feelings of the planters at the date of the resolutions of the House of Commons. They were at that period, and had been for some years, in great pecuniary distress, from the low prices of sugar and rum in this country; they ascribed much of their embarrassment to the pressure of taxation on these articles, there having been no reduction of the excessive war duty on the former, while the tax on the latter amounted to 600 per cent. on the market-price of a gallon, proof-strength, or some thousands per cent. on the net proceeds remaining to the planter, after paying all charges. A reduction of war duties had taken place on some articles affecting other classes of the community, whilst the duty on coffee had been raised since the peace from eight-pence to one shilling per pound, or fifty per cent. When to these circumstances you add the aspersions on their characters of which I have given some specimens in a former page, you will be able to form a tolerably correct idea of the situation and feelings of the planters, when Lord Bathurst made his first communication. I now beg you to remark certain points which were well known to Lord Bathurst at that period.

* "If the condition of the slave is to be improved, that improvement is to be introduced through the medium of his master. The masters are the instruments through whom, and by whom, you must act upon the slave population; and if, by any proceedings of ours, we shall unhappily place between the slave and his master the barrier of insurmountable hostility, we shall at once put an end to the best chance of emancipation, or even of amendment: instead of diffusing gradually over those dark regions a pure and salutary light, we may at once kindle a flame only to be quenched in blood."—*Mr. Canning, House of Commons.*

1st. His lordship knew the existence of the feeling I have described.

2nd. His lordship knew the falsehood of the charges brought against the colonists as a body. In a despatch to the governor of Jamaica, 14th July 1824, he says, "The assembly of Jamaica shewed their "anxiety for the improvement of the condition "of their slaves by many of the provisions of the "consolidation act in 1816." His lordship has elsewhere stated that great improvements had taken place in the condition of the slaves, as well from the humane disposition of the planters as from the laws which had been enacted. In the year 1818, when Lord Combermere was governor of Barbadoes and commander-in-chief in the Leeward Islands, he says, "During my visits to the "other West India islands, I have taken great "pains *personally* to inform myself respecting "the actual treatment of slaves; and it is with "the most sincere pleasure and gratification "that I observed, almost universally, the great-"est attention paid by planters to the domestic "comforts and proper regulations of the labours "of their slaves." Of Barbadoes itself Lord Com-"bermere reports even more favourably. In 1816, in Demerara, the inhabitants petitioned the governor and court of policy, praying that the colony might be divided into parishes or districts, and that they would cheerfully pay their share of expense to have clergymen selected by the bishop of London; they prayed for other improvements: the petition was approved by the governor and court of policy, and transmitted to the colonial department, where it was suffered to remain unnoticed.

3rdly. His lordship knew that amongst the inducements held out by the nation to persons to settle in the colonies, the one most highly prized (after that of the sacred guarantee of the rights of property) was the authority conferred on the local

legislatures to enact all laws for the internal regulation of the colonies subject to the sanction of the king in council. Of this right, Mr. Canning has said, the "local legislatures are "not a little jealous."

4thly. His lordship knew that amongst the temptations offered by the nation were more than one act of parliament, securing facilities and advantages to capitalists disposed to lend money on the security of West India property, that even aliens were invited to become lenders.

You are now enabled to perceive the relative position of both parties, and qualified to judge of his lordship's proceedings.

You will naturally suppose, that, in accordance with Mr. Canning's views, the first step was to *conciliate* the planters; that the first despatch of the noble secretary proclaimed to them that his lordship had no affinity of feeling with their calumniators; that the testimonies in their favour in his office should be published, not suppressed; that he would use his best endeavours with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to relieve them of a portion of their burthens as soon as practicable; that he would steer clear of all contact with their privileges; and that, before he submitted to their consideration any alteration in the laws, he should be in possession of the fullest information from persons of ability and honour, whom he should employ for the special purpose of instituting impartial enquiries on the spot. You will search in vain for any of these consolatory expressions in his lordship's despatches. He allows the colonists to believe that he gives full credit to their enemies; he keeps every testimony in their favour snug in his office; he makes no allusion to their pecuniary complaints; he institutes no investigation; he respects no rights or privileges, but at once tells the governors, that the following packet should convey the "*instructions*" which his Majesty's government would "*issue.*"

Accordingly, that next packet did convey such instructions (see page 5), consisting of many pages of legislative innovations, on a system that "no pre-"ceding generation of British legislators had ven-"tured to touch with a reforming hand*;" and, by way of making those innovations acceptable to the colonial legislatures, he declares, that "they are not "to be understood as affording a full development of "what his Majesty's government have in contem-"plation." Lest the colonial legislatures should be inoculated with a little of Mr. Canning's diffidence on subjects of such vital importance, his lordship very considerately provides (see p. 6) that the governors and crown lawyers shall assist; and that, in the event of their being all unequal to the task, he will immediately employ the Imperial Parliament! It was no doubt very kind in Lord Bathurst to offer to save the Colonial legislatures so much trouble; but the local legislatures were ungrateful enough to undervalue all this paternal care and tenderness: they considered it little better than an invasion of their rights and privileges, and declined to give up their exclusive province to legislate in all matters of internal regulation. The House of Assembly in Jamaica coupled their rejection of Lord Bathurst's assistance with the declaration, that "This house, however, will at all "times receive with attention and respect any sug-"gestion of His Majesty's ministers, relating to "legislation, when offered *in a consistent and becoming* "*manner*." You will be pleased to observe, that at the time when Lord Bathurst thus treated the local legislatures, as if they had no rights, or indeed as if they had never even supposed themselves to be

* "Do we, in the ardour of our nascent reformation, forget, that "during the ages for which this system has existed, no preceding "generation of legislators has ventured to touch it with a reforming "hand?—and have we the vanity to flatter ourselves that we can "annihilate it at a blow? No, sir, no;—we must be contented to "proceed, as I save already said, *gradually and cautiously*."

Mr. Canning.

possessed of any, his Lordship had not charged them with any acts calculated to afford a pretext for calling their rights or even their usefulness into question. The forty-second clause of the Trinidad Order in Council is a virtual repeal of the Acts of Parliament encouraging loans on West India property; nay, it is tantamount to an act to compel mortgagees to foreclose all mortgages on the estates of planters resident in the West Indies; for what merchant would lend money when he knew that the borrower might destroy his security by two "unlawful" acts?—and what merchant would continue his advances, except on condition that the planter removed from a place where he might subject himself to the forfeiture of his property by being guilty of two unlawful acts. If a man is to forfeit his property, and be incapable of holding any thereafter for committing two unlawful acts, I should like to know what would be his lordship's situation if judged by laws framed in a similar spirit! You will at once see that no planter in debt would be allowed to reside in the West Indies; that he must remove from his plantation, and consequently increase his embarrassments by the expense of residing elsewhere, and having to pay an agent. His lordship's acts are so opposite to what Mr. Canning has described as his duty, that I almost suspect his lordship has transposed Mr. Canning's words, and read them—"to do "the greatest possible mischief with the least, possible good." If his lordship establishes this reading, I must acknowledge that he is entitled to an acquittal.

I have reserved for a distinct examination, on account of its importance, the question of "compulsory manumission," which Mr. Canning calls the "opening by which slavery itself may escape." That right honourable gentleman has said, "I do "maintain that we, having all concurred in the guilt "of rearing and fostering the evil, are not to turn "round upon the planters, and say, 'You alone

" shall suffer all the penalty; we determine to get " rid of the moral pestilence, which affects our " character as much as yours, which we have as " much contributed to propagate as *you*; but *you*, " as spotted lepers, shall be banished from our " society, and cast to utter ruin, to expiate our " common crime.'" In Lord Bathurst's letter to the governor of Demerara, of the 25th of February last, he says, "In the event of the owner and the " slave not agreeing in the price of the slave's " manumission, the owner shall appoint one, the " protector of slaves another, and an umpire shall " be appointed by the chief judge." "It is clear that " an arbitration on such a principle would protect the " interests of the owner; and, if there were any " objection, it would be that the bias was in his " favour."—Without stopping to canvas this last assertion, I shall just observe that I cannot comprehend by what process of reasoning it can be supported, as the protector of slaves and the chief judge hold their appointments at the pleasure of the colonial department, the head of which has expressed his wish to promote and facilitate manumissions; and a more effectual mode of gratifying that wish than naming as arbitrators and umpires, persons known to think unfavourably of colonial property, I cannot conceive. I shall assume that the arbitrators are qualified and impartial, and even that they make a just award according to Lord Bathurst's principle, which he explains to be " a fair estimate of the loss which the owner may " sustain." I shall suppose that the two first negroes who apply for manumission in Demerara belong to adjoining estates, the one estate rich soil, and the other poor, from a sand reef or any other cause, (and such cases of inequality* are not unusual):

* Besides the very common inequality of soil, there is a great difference in the value of estates from other causes. The works and buildings of a sugar estate are worth much more than the works and buildings on coffee or cotton plantations.

the estate with rich soil has just sufficient strength for its cultivation, whilst the other is overhanded. When the difference of the soil and strength are taken into consideration, it will be found, although the two negroes are in themselves of precisely the same value in every respect, that the slave belonging to the plantation with rich soil will have to pay much more than the other. I shall suppose double; say, for the former case, £400; and for the latter, £200. The owner who has to receive the £400 is not treated more liberally than his neighbour, who has only to receive £200: but what will be the feeling and opinion of the negro, who has to pay the £400? Will he acquiesce in the justice of the award? What will be the opinion and feelings of all the other slaves on the same property? Will they work cheerfully for their master, and will they also labour cheerfully for themselves, to acquire double the amount that their brethren on the adjoining plantation would require to purchase freedom? The answer is obvious. The result would be general and well-grounded dissatisfaction. The owner would soon find that the £400 would be no compensation to him; indeed, that no money could make amends for the exasperated and discontented feelings of his negroes. Let me, however, proceed a little further with Lord Bathurst's principle of compensation. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the negroes would quietly and contentedly submit to the inequality of the price of manumission, the work of emancipation would not make much progress. After a certain number of manumissions, the slaves remaining would be reduced to the number without which the profitable cultivation could not be carried on; consequently all attempt at purchasing freedom must be vain, as the compensation to the masters would be nothing short of the whole value of the estate. To deprive a planter of any negroes after the strength of his estate has been reduced to the lowest number with which sufficient produce

could be raised to defray expenses, and leave some return to the proprietor, would be to deprive him of the entire value of his property. Before the progress of emancipation is traced to this stage, it must be evident, on the least reflection, that the price of manumissions must increase according, and in proportion to their number; which is a fatal objection to Lord Bathurst's principle, as it is impossible to compensate the owner for the discontent engendered in the minds of his slaves by their knowing that the price would thus rise on them. Another disadvantage of a serious character would accrue to the proprietor of a valuable estate. It has long been customary, when sales of slaves take place, to respect their repugnance to any particular person, as well as to gratify them when it can be done, by selling them to those whom they prefer; but should the price of manumission be regulated by the value of the estate to which a negro is attached, as well as by his own value, no proprietor of a productive property would be able to purchase slaves who would willingly go to him. No principle of appraisement that does not combine justice to the slave and to the owner, can ever secure a fair compensation to the planter. It is self-evident that if the price which a slave has to pay for his freedom is to depend upon the productiveness of the estate to which he may belong, and on his own individual value from bodily strength, intelligence, and faithfulness, that his interest is opposed to that of his master, and that his ingenuity will be exerted to diminish his own value, as well as that of his master's estate. Lord Bathurst, in his despatch to the governor of Demerara of the 25th Feb. last, already alluded to, has laboured hard to meet the difficulties urged by the court of policy; he says, "The principle of manumission will proceed on pre- "sumptive evidence of the slave having acquired "habits of industry which may fit him for an inde- "pendent existence, while it will secure to the "owner that compensation to which it may be found

" by experience, as the measure advances in opera-
" tion, he will be fairly entitled; and it is by ex-
" perience alone that this can be ascertained." So the planter is to give up his property on "presumptive " evidence," and to trust to "experience" for compensation! I consider all such loose reasoning as vain attempts to screen the country from paying for the "opening by which slavery may escape." If the nation *honestly* desires to make this "opening," means may be devised for effecting it, "compatible " with the well-being of the slaves, with the safety of " the colonies, and with a fair and equitable conside-
" ration of the interests of private property;" but the nation must not shrink from its share of the expense. I hold it to be beyond the reach of human ingenuity to achieve "compulsory manumission," with justice to the planter and slave, except by an honest contribution on the part of the country. I am not so presumptuous as to imagine that the plan I shall take the liberty of suggesting is free from objection, but I believe I am not too sanguine in thinking that it is wholly divested of the glaring injustice and inconsistencies inherent in that proposed by Lord Bathurst. The grand object manifestly is to reconcile the interests and feelings of both the masters and slaves—any measure failing in this must be palpably defective in application. I conceive that a near approach would be made to that happy consummation by fixing a sum, as the value of each description of slave, not to be altered or affected by any consideration of strength, skill, or character, but to be regulated entirely by the nature of the occupation and age of the slave. For instance, the population of a West India estate is composed of boilers, coopers, carpenters, tradesmen of various other descriptions, and field negroes. Let a price be fixed for each of these classes (and of any other class into which the slave population of the colonies may be divided), according to age. A table of these particulars might be made public in each colony, and thus

obviate all doubt. Whenever a slave could produce the sum attaching to his class and age, as the fruits of his or her honest industry, *but not otherwise*, the slave should be entitled to demand freedom on the payment thereof, and the owner should be obliged to grant it, after having had such slave appraised according to Lord Bathurst's principle of compensation for the actual loss, and having been paid the difference between such appraisement and the sum received from the slave. This difference to be paid by the British nation. If the slaves thus manumitted will work for reasonable hire, as has been contended, the national sacrifice will be inconsiderable; and if they will not so work, it is fit that the nation should pay for the experiment. By Lord Bathurst's principle, the slaves would have a temptation to diminish their value. By my plan, they would have every inducement to behave well and to improve themselves, because every step in improvement would be an additional facility in acquiring the means of purchase. For this marked and inestimable distinction the nation ought to pay most cheerfully, provided the professions in favour of the slave be sincere. As the value of slaves throughout the colonies is not the same, it would of course be necessary that the prices fixed for each class of negroes should be regulated according to the peculiar circumstances of each colony. It is also obvious that my plan could not come into *full* operation at once, and that even when it did it would not be so perfect as to bid defiance to cavil, or even to reasonable objection; for I am not blind to some points susceptible of improvement. All that I venture to believe is, that it is the best that has yet been offered. In the equitable arrangement of prices of manumissions, and in the mode of ascertaining the fair compensation to the planters, there will doubtless be many difficulties to overcome.

Having laid before you the proceedings of the Colonial Department, and pointed out some of the bearings of these proceedings, I now request your

attention, on constitutional considerations, to the danger that will ensue if you confer on them the authority of parliamentary sanction. The rights of property, which are vested in the planters, have been placed by a nobleman* more distinguished for his rank and private virtues, than for his legal knowledge, on a footing with those of receivers of stolen goods; but an author has been found to deny to the planters even the respectable† rights so liberally conceded by the noble duke, and to assert that, as by the "Gospel Dispensation" there can be no such state as West India slavery, there can be no titles, yet I believe I may venture to rely on the national faith, pledged with all the solemnity prescribed by the British constitution, and assume that the planters' rights are undoubted. No charge has been brought against them of having violated any of the conditions on which the rights were granted; on the contrary, it is allowed that they have greatly ameliorated the condition of the slaves since this country ceased to force supplies on the colonies—indeed, it is not pretended that the national guaranty was granted to ensure a state of comfort superior to that now enjoyed by the slaves. If in these circumstances a secretary of state be authorized to persevere in a course that may have the effect of lessening in value, or of rendering insecure the property of the planters; if he is to be the sole judge of what may produce these effects, is it not evident that the rights, under

* Duke of Devonshire, at the Derby county meeting.

† "Let us recollect what prodigious ruin one unguarded expres-
"sion, dropt in the heat of debate, may occasion to those whom we
"would not willingly injure; while it is at the same time clear that
"the most ardent and enthusiastic eloquence cannot hasten the en-
"joyment of freedom by those who are not yet in a fit state to
"receive the boon."—*Mr. Canning.*

"My fixed opinion is, that those great and desirable objects have
"been more retarded by the intemperate zeal of those who have
"been the advocates of such measures, than they had been or could
"be by any direct opposition on the part of those who have opposed
"them."—*Lord Chancellor's Speech, House of Lords.*

the most solemn national pledge, dwindle into rights dependent on the will of a secretary of state? It would startle you to hear a secretary of state avow that property held under acts of parliament was at his mercy; yet Lord Bathurst's proceedings towards the colonists have not stopt short of such a declaration. He requires the colonists to adopt certain measures —they say that the value and security of their property would be thereby affected, and therefore demand a pledge of indemnification against loss *. His lordship thinks the measure will increase both the value and security of property, and therefore will not entertain a proposal respecting indemnity. His lordship tells the planters that they must sell such parts of their property as may be demanded of them, and that certain persons shall be the judges of what they are to receive in compensation. The planters say that they will not sell such parts as may be demanded, that they will only sell such parts as they please, and that they will not leave it to the persons whom his lordship names, to estimate the value of their property, but that they will keep it until they can get what they think to be its value—they add, that if they were not to be the judges of the parts to be sold, they might be deprived of the very parts without which the rest would be valueless; the stream that turns the mill—the centre-stone of the arch. His lordship replies that their arguments have had no weight, and that he must be obeyed, or he will call down on them the vengeance of the King in council and of parliament. It is to be observed that his lordship's measures had undergone no examination be-

* "Your Committee have also learnt from the agent, that in his "conference with Ministers, it has been refused to acknowledge our "claims to compensation for the injuries the colonies must sustain "in the mere endeavour to carry the scheme of emancipation into "effect; by which refusal the Ministers have shewn an inclination "not only to dispose of our property without our consent, but even "to violate those common rules of honesty which ought to govern "nations as well as private persons."—*Report of a Committee to the House of Assembly, Jamaica*, 11 *Dec.* 1823.

fore parliament;—no committees had sat in anxious deliberation; no witnesses had been examined on the probable effects; no counsel had been heard; in short, not one of the safeguards provided against the inroads to be made on private property by half a mile of road, a bridge, dock, or a tunnel, were thought necessary, as only the rights, and property, and lives of persons under the displeasure of the public were concerned! It is dangerous to establish as a precedent that whenever the public voice is raised,—whatever be the means or artifices employed for that purpose, it is to be obeyed without enquiry, and without respect for acknowledged rights. When great public excitement exists, it is the duty of government to be doubly vigilant in going with the stream to steer clear of all encroachments on private property. This caution once neglected, who can say that his property will not be the next sacrificed? The contempt manifested by Lord Bathurst for the rights and privileges of the colonists can be ascribed to nothing but a feeling of security, arising from the persuasion that the public voice is directed against them. In other cases government has sought the sanction of parliamentary committees, or reports of commissioners. For instance, the change effected in the law of Scotland by the introduction of trial by jury in civil cases, although an acknowledged improvement, was preceded by a laborious investigation, in the course of which every person whose interests were likely to be affected, had an opportunity of being heard. No important alteration has been attempted either in Scotland or Ireland without similar caution and investigation. In England circumspection is as much in fashion: even acts of parliament passed for temporary purposes are not allowed to expire without enquiry: the Bank Restriction Act of 1797, which was only intended as a temporary measure, and the duration of which beyond two years after a general peace was never contemplated, was allowed to exist for years afterwards, and was not

repealed until a full examination of every party and interest before committees of both Houses of Parliament. The corn laws may be adduced as another precedent for caution. The very advocates for them have long been satisfied that they are bad, but it has never been suggested by the wildest theorist that they ought to be abolished without enquiry. So far from that, the government sent a gentleman supposed to be well qualified, to the continent, for the express purpose of collecting information, and both Houses of Parliament will have been in possession of the information for months before the discussion, and before any thing is actually determined, there will be committees of both houses, and witnesses examined from different parts of the country. That such extreme caution is not superfluous, one example from the proceedings of the present year will prove. His Majesty's ministers had expressed themselves in strong terms on the justice, and, indeed, indispensable necessity of placing the Scotch and English banks on the same footing respecting small notes. The Prime Minister had said that without such uniformity the Bank of England would have to keep specie for all the Scotch banks, without any remuneration, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had gone so far as to declare, that without such uniformity he would not envy the situation of any future Chancellor of the Exchequer; but when the subject was investigated before a committee of the House of Commons, the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself joined the majority in voting against that uniformity.

It will scarcely be said after Mr. Canning's description of the importance and difficulty of the West India question, that it deserved or required less caution, consideration, and enquiry, than the subjects which I have just enumerated; and, therefore, I presume, now that there has been time for reflection, that no further proceedings will be adopted without the fullest and fairest investigation of the claims of

the planters. If his Majesty's government will consent to be as cautious for the next three years, as Lord Bathust, in their names, has been precipitate for the last three, they will make some amends to the colonist, and accomplish their object in a more effectual manner than by harshness and temerity. Mr. Canning, as the organ of administration in the House of Commons, has uniformly treated the question as one requiring time and caution; and deprecated the interference of parliament on any pretext short of contumacy. The subjoined extracts* will demonstrate that the conduct of the colonists manifests a very different spirit from that of contumacy. Wherever a disposition has been evinced to delay compliance with the wishes of

* "The legislature of the Bahamas have evinced their anxiety for "the improvement of the condition of the slaves, by their late act "for amending and consolidating the slave laws, which it is *impos-* "*sible not* to view as comprising many humane and judicious enact- "ments materially contributing to such improvement."—*Lord Bathurst to the Governor of the Bahamas, 14th Aug.* 1824.

"Although after a full consideration of the Grenada act, I can- "not but be sensible that it falls short of what has been recommend- "ed, yet it deserves to be considered as an important improvement "of the existing code. Its provisions are *all* of a beneficial nature "as far as they go, and contain nothing that can stand in the way "of its confirmation. Where the enactments are deficient, either in "defining or securing their object, there is a manifest good inten- "tion, which assures me, that these inadvertencies will be readily "corrected."—*Lord Bathurst to the Governor of Grenada, 20th Oct.* 1825.

"I am convinced, that there is a very sincere desire to do, from "time to time, what may appear practicable."—*Governor of Jamaica to Lord Bathurst, 24th Dec.* 1824.

"The Court of Policy and the inhabitants of this colony generally, "are heartily disposed to meet the views of his Majesty's government "with regard to every practicable amelioration of the state of the "slave population."—*Governor of Demerara to Lord Bathurst, 2d April,* 1824.

"From a residence of nearly fifteen years in this colony, I am "happy to bear testimony to the kind and careful treatment of the "slaves by every proprietor here; and I am highly gratified in be- "ing able to state, that many of the improvements suggested by the

government to as great an extent as would be consistent with a due regard to safety and the rights of property, that disposition may in every instance be attributed to Lord Bathurst's *inconsiderate* and *unconciliating* despatches of the 12th of June, and 9th of July, 1823, on which I have already offered remarks.

The course which I humbly suggest is, a par-

" government at home, have been already anticipated by the huma-
" nity and wisdom of those who have legislated for this colony, during
" my residence in it."—*Governor of St. Vincent's to the Speaker of the Council.*

" I am happy in being able to assure your lordship, that a very
" general wish to ameliorate the condition of the slaves, and to in-
" struct them in the principles of the Established Church, seems to
" pervade the great mass of the proprietors, and every facility is af-
forded of visiting the several plantations."—*Bishop of Jamaica to Lord Bathurst, 12th March,* 1825.

" I have the highest satisfaction in being able to assure your lord-
" ship, that the same good feelings which I had the pleasure to com-
" municate upon a former occasion, with regard to Kingston, conti-
" nues to animate every part of this island which I have hitherto
" visited. Mr. Archdeacon Pope and myself have just completed a
" progress through all the parishes, except two: a detailed account
" of all ecclesiastical matters which came under our notice, shall be
" forwarded to your lordship as soon as I am furnished with all the
" necessary particulars from the clergy. The general result of our
" observations has been a hearty desire on the part of the proprietors
" generally, or their representatives, cheerfully to promote, as far
" as their limited means will allow, any measures which I have
" thought it my duty to suggest for the benefit of the church. Pub-
" lic meetings have been called in many parishes, and private sub-
" scriptions are entered into, to promote the same desirable object."
—*Bishop of Jamaica to Lord Bathurst, 16th March,* 1825.

" I have the honour to inform your lordship, that on visiting the
" several islands within my diocese, I was received throughout with
" every mark of public and private respect, accompanied with the
" assurance on the part of the respective legislatures and proprietors,
" of their readiness to co-operate with me, to the utmost extent of
" their means, in the measures which I had the honour to propose."
—*Bishop of Barbadoes to Lord Bathurst, 7th Oct.* 1825.

" I trust that your lordship will regard this liberal grant as a fur-
" ther proof of the good disposition existing in the island of Barba-
" does (and I may with truth add, in every other island within my
" diocese), to extend and place on a more effectual footing the seve-
" ral means of religious instruction."—*Bishop of Barbadoes to Lord Bathurst, 5th Nov.* 1825.

liamentary declaration to the effect, that there is no intention to deny the rights and privileges of the colonists—that before the adoption of any measures affecting their interests, the fullest and most impartial investigation will be allowed; that parliament is sensible that the condition of the slaves has been ameliorated of late years; that there is, therefore, a well grounded expectation that the planters will introduce the ameliorations recommended by his Majesty's government, with as little delay as is consistent with a due regard to the safety of the colonies. That in regard to the question of permitting the slaves to purchase their freedom without the consent of their owners, nothing should be pressed on the colonists until the important subject has undergone the fullest investigation in the way best calculated to do justice to all parties. Such a declaration would conciliate the colonists, and incline them to do every thing in their power to consult the wishes of government. Indeed, I might venture to predict, that in less than three years it would be found that the substance of every important measure in the Trinidad order in council would be found in the codes of the other colonies, save and except the provisions of the forty-second clause, which are more adverse to the spirit of the present day than any of the laws denounced by Mr. Wilberforce, as expressed in characters of blood; and except, also, the clause sanctioning manumission against the consent of the owner. Should my prediction be verified, of which I have not the shadow of a doubt, the question for your consideration would be narrowed to that of "compulsory manumission;" and that question is of such vital interest, that time ought to be allowed for the fullest consideration, and the most extended enquiry. You will be pleased to bear in mind that this measure has been brought forward without any proof that slaves who acquire their freedom through habits of industry, find in any reasonable wages sufficient inducement to continue industrious. All past ex-

perience is at variance with the presumption that any rate of hire, however high, will overcome their repugnance to labour.* To compel them to work would require a system of coercion far more galling than a state of slavery. Without coercion, those manumitted would soon sink into a state of indolence and barbarism. But for argument, let us suppose that when slaves become enlightened and buy their freedom with the earnings of their industry, they will work for wages. They would naturally strive to obtain high wages, and the example of this country would furnish them with the means. When workmen in this country know that their masters have large orders to execute within a particular time, they immediately demand an increase of wages proportioned to what they know to be the necessity for their assistance. Masters endeavour to conceal from their workmen the extent of the orders they receive. In the West Indies concealment would be impossible, as the negroes would see when the various crops of sugar, coffee, and cotton, were in a state to occasion total loss through failure of assistance, and they would not neglect the opportunities to refuse to work without excessive wages. In this country men

* "With respect to free labour, he must say, that from all the information he had received upon the subject, he could not point out one instance in which the experiment of an alteration from compulsory to free labour had been fairly tried and succeeded: indeed, he knew many instances in which that experiment had failed."—*Lord Bathurst's Speech, House of Lords, 16th March*, 1824.

"As to the free negroes, it appears, that their industry is still more sparing of their repugnance to all sorts of labour, the most ample evidence is produced in the Report of the Committee of Privy Council, in 1788."—*Brougham on Colonial Policy.*

"I must be allowed to suspect, that before we people the unsettled colonies with negroes who will work for hire, we must discover a new race of Africans, industrious in their own country, or invent some method of operating instantaneously upon the tribes already known; an enlargement of desires and a change of habits, which in the natural progress of human society, is the slow produce of many succeeding ages."—*Brougham on Colonial Policy.*

cannot long abstain from work; they must pay for food, clothing, and lodging. In the West Indies the calls for money would not be equally urgent. All absolute wants could be supplied with little trouble; and the planters would be left at the mercy of the free negroes. Under such circumstances no estate would be worth two years' purchase. With such possibilities in prospect, it is not surprising that the planters should be opposed to the opening of any other door to let out slavery than that which is now open, and through which there is a gradual escape. In Jamaica the manumissions are said to have been four thousand, between the years 1820 and 1823; and in the beginning of the present year, there were upwards of one hundred voluntary manumissions in Demerara. It will probably be found on examining the question, that any larger opening would be incompatible "with the well-being of the slaves themselves, with the safety of the colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the rights of private property."

THE END.

W. WILSON, PRINTER, 57, SKINNER-STREET, LONDON.

THOUGHTS

ON

MEDICAL EDUCATION.

London: Printed at the Temple Printing Office,
BY J. MOYES, SOUVERIE STREET.

THOUGHTS

ON

MEDICAL EDUCATION,

AND

A PLAN FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT;

ADDRESSED TO

THE COUNCIL

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

By ANTHONY TODD THOMSON, M.D. F.L.S.
&c. &c. &c.

Dictu necessaria.—*Plin.*

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

M.DCCC.XXVI.

TO

THE COUNCIL, &c.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

CIRCUMSTANCES connected with the progressive march of knowledge, which so conspicuously distinguishes the period in which we live, have placed within your power the opportunity of improving greatly the system of education of young men designed for the Medical Profession; and, certainly, none of the objects of the New University, over which you are appointed to preside, is of more general importance than the promotion of the study of medicine. To it, indeed, in my humble opinion, is the University to look for a large share of its prosperity, provided the system of instruction which it shall follow be settled upon a sound foundation, and embrace as its object the formation of efficient medical practitioners.

As the nature of your projected establishment, and the era of its foundation, equally exempt you

from being fettered by the chains of prejudice, and, by a weak adherence to antiquity, when it possesses no other claim to veneration than that which is derived from the rust which covers it, the public has every reason to hope, that you will be guided in adopting your plans of teaching, rather by their fitness for the objects intended to be accomplished, than by any respect for the established usages of other universities. The more venerable, indeed, these institutions are, the less likely are they to contain proper models for modern education; and in no branch of study is this so evident as in that of medicine, as the principal improvements which it can boast of have been effected within the last half century. Impressed with these truths, and anxious to promote, by any means in my power, the benefit of a profession to which I owe every thing I possess, I am emboldened to lay before you my opinions on the subject of medical education, in the hope that they may direct your attention to so important an object, and, by inducing you to obtain opinions upon it from the best informed members of the profession, you may be enabled to arrange such a course of studies for those who shall be educated for medicine in the University of London, as may equally advance the profession and benefit the public.

It is unnecessary for me to detail the ineffi-

ciency of the present mode of educating young men who are designed to practise medicine, more especially of those who are intended for general practitioners in England: much of it arises from one evil, which I deeply regret you cannot remove; but which, as it has been lately deeply felt and lamented by the liberal part of the profession, I will shortly notice:—I mean the custom of serving apprenticeships. When a parent determines to educate his son for the practice of medicine, the boy is taken from school, and, without any other preliminary education than a very slender proficiency in the Latin language, perhaps a superficial knowledge of Greek and of French, and a very imperfect acquaintance with English, is bound an apprentice to a general practitioner. This period of unnecessary servitude occupies five of the best years of his life; and I will venture to affirm, that it is generally dissipated in acquiring little more than the method of compounding medicines, which might be attained in as many months. Habits of idleness are consequently formed; the mind of the pupil is filled with confused ideas of the effects of drugs, without any knowledge of the principles which should always direct their application; and it is in the last year only of his apprenticeship, or, in numerous instances, not until it be completed, that he really begins the

study of his profession. But suppose that the student has now passed the twentieth year of his age; that he feels the necessity of commencing the actual business of life; and, consequently, looking chiefly to the rapid attainment of such a portion of information as will enable him to pass his examinations, and enter upon the practice of his profession, that he attends only to those branches of medical education which will enable him to accomplish these objects in the shortest period of time. He studies anatomy, and dissects, because he cannot advance one step without these aids; but, from his ignorance of mechanics and of chemistry, he is not prepared to understand physiology; and having no acquaintance with the philosophy of mind, he cannot trace its influence upon the corporeal functions; so that not unfrequently he becomes a mere routine practitioner, or a trader in specifics, depending for assistance, in every case of difficulty, on the opinion and skill of others. And it is well for the public, if the imperfectly educated practitioner timely demand such assistance; for, as ignorance and temerity generally go hand in hand, the threatened danger is too often either not perceived, or the disease is awkwardly grappled with, until the moment has passed in which skill and judgment might have averted the fatal result. Another disadvantage arising from

apprenticeships, is the trading feelings with which it narrows the mind of the pupil; and under which the profession has been long degraded, whilst the public has not been benefited. I am aware that by the act commonly called the Apothecaries' Act, an apprenticeship of five years is required to have been served by every candidate who presents himself for examination at Apothecaries' Hall, for a license to practice as an apothecary in England and Wales: but I also know that this regulation is deeply to be lamented; and, if sufficient evidence be adduced of its uselessness and evil tendency, a hope may be entertained that it will yet be repealed. At all events, the public ought to be instructed, that in binding youths to a general practitioner, they are not, in truth, commencing their medical education; that, in the majority of instances, the apprentice learns nothing; and that much more than "walking the hospitals" is required, at the termination of an apprenticeship, to form a skilful and efficient practitioner. It cannot, however, be denied, that some of the most distinguished men, who have adorned and advanced the medical profession, have served apprenticeships; but the talent with which they were gifted, and the industry which brought it into operation, would, under any circumstances, have elevated these individuals above their cotemporaries.

Some years since, when the Apothecaries' Act was framed, the subject of apprenticeships was fully discussed, and strong arguments were advanced against the continuance of the custom; but these were overruled, chiefly on the ground that many individuals who were intended for general practitioners could not afford to be educated in any other manner; and that as long as society consisted of different ranks, practitioners of different grades would be required. I am willing to admit that the different ranks of society demand different grades of medical men; but I cannot acquiesce in the opinion, that the lives of the labouring part of the community and of the poor are to be intrusted to the half-educated practitioner, merely because they are not able to remunerate him in the same degree as the rich, who are attended by the more fortunate of his professional brethren. In this respect, indeed, the pauper, who is forced to solicit admission into an hospital, when he is overtaken by disease, or has suffered any corporeal injury from accident, is much better attended than the industrious mechanic, whose laudable pride prevents him from entering an hospital. He is forced to employ a practitioner of inferior degree, not merely as to professional rank, but in medical education; and thus many valuable lives are lost. Now this is an evil deeply to be lamented; and although I

must allow that the constitution of society requires practitioners of medicine of various grades, yet I must contend that all should receive the same medical education. Were this the case, there would still exist apothecaries, surgeons, and physicians; for, if all practitioners were equally well educated, different grades must exist in the profession, as long as ingenuity, judgment, and the powers of intellect, are found in different degrees in the mass of mankind; independent of the advantages which some men must always enjoy over others, from fortune, family connexions, and patronage. If, therefore, medicine is to be practised by every class of practitioners scientifically as a liberal art, rather than followed as a trade in specifics, I trust no arguments are required to convince you that the years now unprofitably spent in apprenticeship may be more advantageously occupied in acquiring the principles of the science; and even should the prejudice which attaches us to old customs, and the continuance of the legal enactment referred to, maintain the system of apprenticeships, it may be hoped, that practitioners will be induced to permit their pupils to attend lectures, and to receive all the advantages which can be derived from such a system of instruction. In promoting so desirable a measure, you, as the Council of the University of London, have much in your power,

by adopting such a plan of education as will be calculated not only to benefit the public, but to elevate the profession.

There is certainly some weight in the objections which have been advanced against sending young men of fifteen years of age to the metropolis, unrestrained, to pursue their medical studies; but these objections may be overcome by the certainty, that, although apprenticeships were given up, yet, there would always be found a sufficient number of practitioners willing to receive young men into their families as pupils; and to regulate their studies rather as tutors, than to command their services as masters. It may be supposed that this system would be too expensive; but, when we consider, that from two to three and four hundred guineas are now given as fees of apprenticeship, and that all the necessary expenses of a medical education are still to be incurred after the term of servitude is completed, this argument will be found more specious than solid. I will suppose that a practitioner of medicine receives a youth into his house as a pupil, at one hundred or even one hundred and fifty pounds per annum; and that his fees at the new University and at an hospital will cost an additional fifty pounds,—the whole expenses of the medical education of the pupil, allowing that three years are required to complete it, would not exceed four

hundred and fifty, or, at the utmost, six hundred pounds. Now, on the other hand, suppose two hundred or three hundred guineas are paid as an apprentice fee, the expenses of living and of attending classes and hospitals, for even two years only, after the period of servitude,—will amount to at least three hundred pounds more;—so that the expenses in both systems are nearly the same, whilst the essential advantages of the proposed alteration are much greater than those connected with apprenticeships.

Where are assistants, a very useful body of men, to be procured, if apprenticeships be set aside? is a question which is asked by those who support the present system of educating young men intended for general practitioners. I reply, that assistants, should these still be required by the general practitioner, might be procured from among the young men brought up in the shops of chemists and druggists; and if these only were the compounders of medicines, although their number be now too small in comparison with that of general practitioners throughout England and Wales, yet, as in every thing else, the increased demand would very soon produce an adequate supply. By attending for an hour or two daily on the labours of these individuals, the medical pupils would soon acquire a sufficient knowledge of the manipulations of the laboratory,

without infringing upon the time requisite for more scientific pursuits.

But, admitting that instead of serving apprenticeships, young men were to be placed as pupils only with practitioners of medicine, it will not be difficult to shew, that a systematic plan of medical education is not likely to be pursued in the metropolis, should the present mode of teaching medicine there be continued, notwithstanding the number and the excellency of its hospitals, the schools of medicine attached to them, and the deservedly high character and celebrity of the teachers, both public and private. In the first place, a young man is generally guided in the choice of the school, or the teachers which he selects, by accidental circumstances; in the second place, as in none of these schools he is obliged to prosecute his studies according to a fixed plan, he attends either one class or another, as his inclination or the advice of some fellow-student may direct; even if his course have been arranged by a medical friend, it is very probable that too little thought and consideration have been bestowed upon the subject: and, in the third place, too short a time is occupied in the various courses of lectures, which are annually delivered in the metropolis, to permit them to be full and complete courses. Few examinations, also, take place; the pupils come

too little in contact with the teachers; and in the experimental branches of study no opportunities are afforded to the students to repeat the experiments, in order that they may fully comprehend the changes effected in them, and which determine the results. I do not mention these facts to detract from the merits of the existing teachers of medicine in the metropolis; but, in a matter of so much importance, the true state of the case should be exposed; and I put it to the honour of the teachers of the various branches of medical science in London, to say, whether courses, which, at the Scotch, Irish, and Continental Universities, require six and eight months of daily lecturing, can be delivered in thirty or forty lectures? The thing is impossible; and, consequently, we are authorised in concluding, were the fact not well known, that the best courses of medical lectures delivered in the metropolis are little more than outlines of what they ought to be. Besides, the lecturers generally cease from their labours at the very time when their instructions are likely to be most useful, when practice is enabling them to verify their theories by the test of experience. It is, therefore, a matter of the utmost importance to fix a plan of medical education in the New University, the adherence to which should be imperative; and it is with a view to forward this measure,

as I have already stated, that I now presume to address you, the Council of that projected establishment.

I will suppose that the building for the University is completed; that the lectures are about to commence; and that a young man presents himself to be admitted as a student of medicine. I must presume that, before his wish can be accomplished, the rules of the establishment will require that he be examined regarding his attainments in classical literature. To what extent these may be requisite, it is not my intention to inquire; but certainly the candidate should possess such a knowledge of the Latin and the Greek tongues as may enable him to read the ancient medical authors in the languages in which they wrote. And, besides, as medicine is a profession which elevates its followers to the rank of gentlemen, the student who is desirous of attaining eminence, should possess that portion of classical learning which every gentleman is presumed to have acquired. Mathematics is another branch of general education which every student of medicine should have studied, to a certain extent, before commencing his medical education: for, if it be no difficult task to prove that a knowledge of the principles of mechanics is essential in a complete medical education, it must be obvious, that mathematics, as a preliminary

study, cannot be dispensed with, even were no other advantage obtained from the study of that branch of science than the faculty of following a chain of close and abstract reasoning, which it bestows. The student who enters for medicine should also have a knowledge of drawing; or as much of it, at least, as will enable him to delineate, with facility and accuracy, the parts of the human body, both in the state of health and of disease. It is, indeed, astonishing, that the art of drawing is still so totally neglected in the education of medical men,—when the advantages derived from that accomplishment by a few members of the profession, who have made it an object of study, are so generally known. Besides the facility which drawing affords of rendering permanent diseased appearances of a changeable character, and of communicating ideas of them to others, much more accurate and satisfactory than could be accomplished in many pages of description in words, that delightful art confers upon its votaries almost an additional sense. He who draws the appearances which any object presents, will examine that object more attentively and accurately, and retain a more correct idea of it, than another person, equally interested in gaining a correct idea of it, can do; because the very habit of examining objects with attention, in every point of view, enables him to see parts which are overlooked

by others; and the repeated examination which is required to enable the draftsman to give a correct delineation of the object, fixes it indelibly in his memory. He attains as much accuracy of sight, as the artisan who works in very minute objects acquires of touch; the one seeing and the other feeling circumstances which are not perceptible to others, in whom these senses have been less exercised. The student who can draw obtains also a more exact notion of the relative positions of parts, and remembers them better. As a branch of preliminary education, therefore, the art of drawing should, in my opinion, be required to be known by every youth beginning his medical studies at the New University; and both in mathematics and in drawing, the examinations should not be a mere categorical inquiry, and the exhibition of drawings done at home; but the candidate for admittance should be forced to work a problem in Euclid, and to make a drawing either of a preparation of a morbid part, or of a portion of the recent subject, shut up in a room by himself. A high degree of perfection should not be expected; but the proficiency of the candidate ought to be such as should convince the examiners that he understands enough of these branches of general education, to render them usefully subservient in promoting his acquirement of those parts of the study of medicine, anatomy,

surgery and pathology, which they are calculated to assist.

It may be objected to such a preliminary examination, that, in requiring some knowledge of mathematics and of drawing, more is expected from the students than the first professors themselves will probably possess, since few medical men, even of deservedly high reputation, are acquainted with the use of the pencil: but although the truth of this remark be admitted, yet it does not weaken the argument in favour of the propriety of enforcing, in those who may henceforth commence the study of the profession, an attainment of such preliminary acquirements.

Having determined upon the kind of knowledge which every student who enters for medicine in the New University should possess, before he can be admitted, let us now attempt to arrange those studies which should occupy his attention whilst there, supposing that four sessions of six months, or three of eight months, be the period required to complete his medical education. Before proceeding, however, it is proper that the modified sense in which the word *complete* is used here should be understood; for it must not be imagined that the term alluded to is nearly adequate for the acquirement of such a degree of information as would enable any individual to practise his profession satisfactorily to himself

or beneficially to the public. On the contrary, I am of opinion, that the moment a practitioner ceases to be a student, he is no longer worthy of the confidence of the public; and that the life of a physician can only be truly useful and honourable, when it is unremittingly employed in study, in determining the truth of theoretical opinions by observation, and in proving the value of practical suggestions by the test of experience. The word complete, therefore, is here intended merely to imply that portion of elementary knowledge which a student can receive at college, and which will enable him to commence practising upon sound principles. And having said this much, I will now proceed to lay before you that plan of study, which, in my humble opinion, is calculated to lay the foundation of an efficient and satisfactory practice.

I propose to divide the course of medical studies into three stages, — preparatory, progressive, and practical. The first, or *preparatory* stage, or division, comprehends those studies which convey a knowledge of the forms of bodies and of their parts or fabric, and the most generally adopted arrangements or classifications of natural objects; viz.—

NATURAL HISTORY;
SYSTEMATIC BOTANY;
DESCRIPTIVE ANATOMY.

The second, or PROGRESSIVE, to embrace those studies that contribute to develop the laws which regulate inorganic matter, and the functions of organic bodies: —

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY;
CHEMISTRY;
PHYTOLOGY;
PHYSIOLOGY;
MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

The third, or PRACTICAL, to consist of those studies which convey a knowledge of the ultimate objects of the profession of medicine; and, consequently, teach the application of the previous studies:—

MATERIA MEDICA and PHARMACY;
PATHOLOGY and the PRACTICE of MEDICINE;
SURGERY;
OBSTETRICAL SURGERY and MEDICINE;
MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE;
MEDICAL ETHICS.

During the period required for the studies of the second and third divisions, the student ought to be occupied, daily, for two hours at least, in the dissecting-room, under the direction of an assistant of the professor of anatomy, whose sole duty should be to guide him in his dissections, and to demonstrate the parts dissected: and, during the period of the third division, besides

attending regularly in an hospital where *clinical lectures* are delivered, no opportunity of assisting at the dissections of diseased bodies should be neglected.

Having thus sketched the general outline of the plan of studies which, I humbly submit, as the best adapted for forming an efficient medical practitioner, let us now inquire into the advantages to be derived from those branches of study which are not commonly regarded as necessary in a course of medical education, but which, nevertheless, form a part of this projected course; and discuss the manner in which the whole should be taught.

The branches of study referred to are Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, and Medical Ethics.

With regard to the first of these, *Natural History*, which, in the strict definition of the term, comprehends medicine as one of its branches, but is here employed in its limited signification, it is unnecessary to advance any arguments to prove, that, in a study such as medicine, which refers to the human frame and to the laws which regulate its functions, every information connected with general animal nature, the variety of external forms under which it is displayed, and the diversity of its internal structure, must, to say the least of it, be an important aid in un-

derstanding fully the economy of man: "rerum naturæ contemplatio quamvis non faciat medicum; aptiorem tamen medicinæ reddit, atque perfectum."* Its importance as a preliminary study to a course of medical education has, indeed, been lately acknowledged in framing the new regulations of the University of Edinburgh, which require, that every candidate for a medical degree shall have attended at least one course of Natural History.

But, independent of the advantages which have been adverted to, the study of Natural History by the medical student lays the foundation of one of the most important qualifications of the physician, — the habit of observation. The majority of mankind examine the objects of sight in so imperfect and cursory a manner, that, although they have eyes, yet they do not see; and, on this account, pass from the cradle to the grave almost without possessing one correct idea of external nature. The naturalist, on the contrary, cannot proceed one step in his inquiries without examining, closely and accurately, every object of his study, comparing appearances in one with those in another, so as to be enabled to arrange them in classes, genera, and species. On this account he is led to connect objects apparently dissimilar,

* Pliny, lib. i. in Procem.

and to disjoin others which, to the common observer, appear closely connected; but which, nevertheless, display distinctive characters. In commencing the study of medicine, therefore, with Natural History, the mind of the student is not only expanded and stored with materials, which he will find useful in every stage of his professional progress, but he is tutored to a habit of minute and accurate observation, comparison, and classification; and, as we derive our knowledge of the laws of nature from a comparison of a number of facts the truth of which has been determined by experiment or observation, so, in medical science, we are enabled to infer the existence of general facts by the same means; and thereby to acquire an accurate knowledge of the laws which regulate the animal economy. Without such a preparation, the student will commence the study even of Descriptive Anatomy under great disadvantages.

If the necessity of Natural History as a part of medical education be admitted, it will not be difficult to prove, that, in conjunction with Systematic Botany and Descriptive Anatomy, it should form the first branch of study, inasmuch as it is better adapted to the previous habits of application of a youth who has just quitted school, being addressed chiefly to the eye and the memory, without calling into action the

more complex operations of mind. The intimate connexion between Natural History and Systematic Botany will permit both these courses to be commenced at the same time; but as the study of Descriptive Anatomy should not be entered upon until some progress be made in Natural History, I would propose, that the medical student, who is in the first session of his education, should not attend the first course of anatomical lectures of that session. It may, however, be properly demanded, Who is then to attend the first course of anatomy in each session? I reply, the more advanced students; on which account, that course should have reference to Descriptive Anatomy merely, as it is required in teaching Physiology; and should consequently occupy two-thirds only of the whole session. By this arrangement, the lectures on pure Descriptive Anatomy would not commence until the month of March, by which time the student of the first session will have nearly passed through the courses of Natural History and Systematic Botany, and be disposed and qualified to enter with ardour upon the study of Anatomy, as an extension of those inquiries into the animal structure with which he has been already occupied.

Natural Philosophy, in my opinion, is so essential as a preliminary branch of medical edu-

cation, that I can scarcely conceive how Physiology can be understood without some acquaintance with it. If we wish to explain the manner in which the body is moved by the muscles, must we not have recourse to the doctrines of the lever and the pulley; to those of hydrostatics and hydraulics, to explain the circulation of the blood, and the nature of absorption; to aerostatics and pneumatics, to render more accurate and intelligible our explanation of the functions of respiration and of hearing; and to optics, to illustrate the faculty of vision? The very language, indeed, which is used in explaining the different animal functions, presupposes a knowledge of physics. Thus we speak of bones being levers, joints and fulcra, and muscles the media through which the moving power acts; we illustrate the strength of the cranium by reference to the structure of the arch: we descant on the projectile force of the heart; the impetus of the current of the blood; the resistance of the coats of the vessels; on the rotatory motion of the trunk on the head of the thigh-bone, in the progressive motion of the body; on the centre of gravity, the refraction and reflection of light, and numerous other matters in which expressions are employed, which, to a person ignorant of Natural Philosophy, will tend rather to confuse and render more obscure, than to illustrate, those functions of the human body which

they are intended to explain. It is true, that the animal frame, during life, is actuated by a vital principle, and by powers different from those which regulate inorganic matter; yet it is in part subject to the general laws of material bodies, and without a reference to these, its functions cannot be explained nor understood. For these reasons, I have placed Natural Philosophy at the head of the second or progressive division of studies; because it is necessary for comprehending many of the doctrines of Chemistry, and without it neither those of Physiology nor of Phytology can be understood. It must not be supposed, however, that I would urge the necessity of the medical student attending an entire course of Natural Philosophy — spending time, for example, in the acquirement of astronomy, and some other parts of the science: for although I admit the truth of the remark, that the whole "improves and elevates the mind, by unfolding to it the magnificence, the order, and the beauty manifested in the construction of the material world;"* yet to the medical student, whose pecuniary means, and the time which he can devote to the acquirement of his profession, are too often, unfortunately, very limited, I consider the study of Natural Philosophy essential, only as far as it renders more

* Playfair's Elements of Nat. Phil. vol. i.

comprehensible the principles of the art which he is acquiring and about to practise.

With regard to *Moral Philosophy*, at least that part of it which relates to the philosophy of mind, being regarded as a branch of medical education, there can be only one opinion. The connexion between mind and body, the influence of each upon the other, both as regards the production of diseases and the cure of them, are too obvious to have escaped the eye of the most ordinary medical observer; and the faculty of taking advantage of this reciprocal influence in the treatment of diseases, constitutes one of the highest qualifications of the physician. In that class of diseases in particular, which, from their effects upon the mind, have been termed mental, a previous knowledge of the faculties of mind is absolutely requisite; for although it may be doubted whether we can with propriety speak of a diseased state of mind, insanity, perhaps in every instance, being dependent on some morbid state of the body; yet it is undoubtedly necessary that he who undertakes the cure of insanity should be acquainted with the human mind in what is usually termed its sane state; or how can he presume to investigate those causes which affect its operations, and to trace their results? To the want of this previous knowledge, and to the neglect of the philosophy of mind as a branch of

medical education, is to be attributed the melancholy truth, that the treatment of insanity is that part of medical practice which has advanced least in modern times: and to the same cause must be assigned those unsatisfactory opinions which are delivered by medical men in courts of justice, in cases of supposed or real mental derangement; opinions which not only place those who deliver them in a point of view very different from that in which he who is anxious to be supposed a master of his profession would desire to appear, but are even not unfrequently derogatory to the profession itself. It is unnecessary to dilate upon this part of my subject: enough has been said to prove, that that part of Moral Philosophy which is connected with mind should be regarded as a branch of medical education; and if this be admitted, its study should be made imperative, as a part of the medical course to be followed in the New University. I have placed it as the last of the progressive studies, because it is the most abstruse of these, and requires the student not only to follow closely the prelections of the teacher, but to be able to abstract his own mind from himself; "and placing it before him as it were, so as to examine it with freedom, and with the impartiality of a natural historian."*

* Crichton's Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Mental Derangement, Preface, p. x.

The last of the branches of study referred to as innovations, in the tabular view of the course which I have proposed, is that which I have termed, in the language of Dr. Percival, who is the only author that has written expressly upon the subject, "*Medical Ethics.*" It refers to the conduct of the practitioner in his professional connexion with his professional brethren and with society. Daily experience proves that brilliant talents, that the most scientific acquirements, and a perfect knowledge of his profession, have not in every instance insured to the individual possessing them the public confidence; whilst men of much less erudition, with not half the professional acquirements, and with very inferior judgments, have enjoyed an enviable degree of celebrity and public esteem. To what are these circumstances to be ascribed, if they be not connected with something in the conduct and deportment of the individual which attaches others to him, gives a favourable impression of every thing he does, and inspires confidence in his opinion? As far as the profession is concerned, the conduct of the practitioner requires to be guided by principles of candour and liberality, avoiding every thing which can in the smallest degree lower the character of those with whom he is obliged to act in concert, or whom he may have superseded in the confidence of a patient, in the treatment of any case: his manner

should be a guarantee that he feels the responsibility of his situation, that he practises his profession in earnest; and mild, affable, and conciliating, with a high sense of honour, he should endeavour to win the confidence and friendship of his patients, if he expect to prove successful in administering to their relief. To possess an ascendancy over the minds of others is of primary importance to a medical practitioner: it has a powerful influence on the success of his prescriptions, and is a striking illustration of the part which mind plays in the cure of diseases. The method of attaining such an influence, therefore, ought to be pointed out to every young man about to enter upon the practice of his profession; and, as the subject does not afford sufficient matter for more than five or six lectures, I have proposed that the delivery of these should form a part of the duty of the professor of the Practice of Medicine.

Having thus pointed out, as briefly as possible, the necessity of introducing Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, and Medical Ethics, as branches of medical education, I will now endeavour to describe in what manner each of the studies contained in the course which I have presumed to offer to your consideration should be taught.

No method of communicating scientific in-

formation arrests the attention of the student so forcibly, and consequently is so instructive, as that of lecturing. The pupil finds himself, in the lecture-room, one of a numerous body of auditors, all anxiously engaged in the same course of studies, —a circumstance alone sufficient to arouse his attention, and to convince him of the importance of the object of his pursuit. If the student be thus disposed to receive the information delivered in a crowded lecture-room with more earnestness than if he were a solitary auditor of the instructions of a private tutor, the effect on the lecturer himself must be equally beneficial. He is stimulated to greater exertion by the publicity of his situation; he cannot evade any part of his duty; and the being open to criticisms, even of his pupils, necessarily compels him to keep pace with the progressive improvements in the science which he teaches. Nothing can be more judicious, therefore, than that part of the plan of the New University which proposes to teach by lectures, in the manner of the Scotch and many of the Continental universities. But at the same time, while it must be admitted that much information may be communicated in the form of lectures, yet it cannot be denied, that no science can be properly acquired by a mere attendance upon these discourses. The best lectures can do little more than to point out the mode

of studying any science, and to give an outline of it, which must be filled up and completed in the closet of the student: and as it is of primary importance to ascertain how far this has been accomplished, the pupil should be examined at stated periods as to the extent of his acquirements. By such examinations, the capacity as well as the industry of the pupil become known to the teacher; and he discovers where his aid and advice are required, and on whom his encouragement ought to be bestowed. In the plans of instruction to be adopted in the New University, it is to be hoped, therefore, that examinations will form a very prominent feature; that the pupil and the professor will be brought into closer contact, and that the progress of the former, consequently, will be left to chance less than is the case in the colleges and universities already established.

The adoption of examinations such as are now proposed precludes the necessity of notes being taken in the lecture-room by the students, a custom disadvantageous to a pupil who has not previously some knowledge of the subject of those compositions which he thus attempts, most injudiciously, to make his own; and extremely detrimental, as recent experience has demonstrated, to the interest and the character of the professor. If a student listen attentively to the lecturer, his

mind will be sufficiently impressed with the subject to enable him either to reflect upon it afterwards and, generalising the facts, to store them in his memory, or to make notes of them in his hours of private study; but, in endeavouring to take down the words of a lecturer, his attention is distracted, and he is rendered unfit to digest properly the matter of the discourse. If notes be not, therefore, permitted to be taken, and if examinations be instituted, a proportionately greater necessity of attention is imposed upon the pupil; the idle and careless have no sinister means of getting up a smattering of the subject of an examination, by borrowing the notes of a fellow-student; but each must depend upon the knowledge which he has personally derived from his attendance on lectures, to make a respectable appearance at the examination, where his proficiency is, as it were, to be tried by a jury of his contemporaries and fellow-students. I recollect an anecdote illustrative of this remark, which occurred when I was at Edinburgh. A worthy fellow, who was a general favourite, on account of his amiable disposition, but who was fonder of angling than of study, was enrolled a member of a small society of students, which met weekly for the purpose of examinations on the subjects of the lectures of the week. At the first meeting, it was well known that Tim,

for so I may call my good-natured friend, had been engaged three days on the Esk instead of being at lecture; and yet, to the surprise of all, his replies were ready and tolerably correct. How can this be? was the general exclamation. "Aha!" said Tim, "I am up to a thing or two: I borrowed ——'s notes; and, thus, both enjoyed my sport and obtained a knowledge of the lectures." But the day of reckoning came:— poor Tim was rejected on his examinations for a degree; and, having left the university in disgrace, exchanged the lancet for the sword.

To render my ideas on the subject of examinations more clearly understood, I will now proceed to notice separately each branch of study in the order of its place in the tabular view of the course which I have offered to your notice, as far as relates to the manner in which these examinations should be conducted.

NATURAL HISTORY. — Besides a daily lecture on this subject by the professor, the pupils ought to be examined, at least twice a week, in the museum. They should be called upon to name the different objects which have already been treated of by the lecturer, to state the places which they occupy in the systems adopted or recommended by the professor, and to describe them in the language of the science. I have said that these examinations should be held in the

museum, because I cannot conceive the existence of lectures on Natural History without a museum; and I presume, that a portion of the fund subscribed by the proprietors of the University of London is to be appropriated for the purchase of such a collection, as shall form the nucleus of a complete repository of the objects of this science.

Systematic Botany. — This branch of science should be taught by daily lectures, examinations, and occasional herbalizings, under the guidance of the professor. If a botanic garden be not attached to the University, which however will be the case ere long, means ought to be taken to have a regular supply of recent plants to illustrate the lectures; and a large proportion of these should be medicinal plants. In the Botanical examinations, the pupil should be obliged to name the plant presented to his notice, to state its class and order in the Linnean system, and the place also which it occupies in that of Jussieu: or, if he be unacquainted with the plant, to find it out at the time, by reference to both the abovementioned systems. Prizes should also be instituted for the best *hortus siccus* collected by the pupils during the session; and for the most accurate written descriptions of plants, exhibited for the purpose by the professor at the examinations, after the method of Linneus, and that of Jussieu or De Candolle: but these descriptions

should be written during the time of the examinations.

Descriptive Anatomy.—The examinations in this important branch of medical science should take place three times, at least, in each week, and be held over the body. The parts should be demonstrated and described by the pupils, and their relative situation pointed out in the living as well as the dead subject. Descriptions of parts should also be required to be given from memory, and drawings of them exhibited, for the best of which prizes might be instituted.

I am aware, that many excellent anatomists are of opinion that pupils ought, at their outset, to take the scalpel in their hands, and to learn anatomy from actual dissection: but, although I acknowledge the necessity of acquiring the use of the knife as early as possible, yet I do not feel satisfied of the advantage of such a plan: on the contrary, I believe that more information will be acquired from the dissection of one body, by a pupil who has previously attended a course of descriptive anatomy, and has been besides disciplined by such examinations as I have suggested, than from the mangling of fifty bodies by a student to whom the parts, as they appear when dissected, have not been demonstrated in a regular course of lectures. The one is like a traveller who enters upon the more intimate survey of a territory over

which he has already passed under the direction of an able guide; the other is in the situation of an adventurer, wrecked upon an unknown coast, who travels into the adjoining country without having any idea of what he is likely to meet with, and, consequently, without any particular object of pursuit. I am, therefore, of opinion, that the labours of the dissecting-room should be suspended until the second division of studies be commenced. The student should, nevertheless, be encouraged to dissect the lower animals at home; and in the examinations, the attention of the professor should be directed to ascertain how far his pupil is able to describe or point out parts corresponding to those in the human body, on the dissected bodies of the lower animals. In the lectures on Descriptive Anatomy, indeed, every care should be taken to illustrate the human by comparative anatomy. I have witnessed the excellent results of this method of teaching anatomy in more than one instance; and certainly no other method is so well calculated to arrest the attention of the student, and to impress the instructions delivered by the lecturer so indelibly upon his memory. By encouraging also in the pupils the private study of comparative anatomy, facility in the use of the knife is acquired; the spirit of investigation is aroused; and as the objects themselves are smaller, and, to one commencing

the study of anatomy, less disgusting than the human corpse; and as the dissections may be conducted in the chamber of the student, hours which would probably be dissipated in idle and vicious amusements will be usefully and pleasantly occupied. Such exercises in comparative anatomy, give the pupil besides a greater zest for the study of Natural History, and fix his attention on facts and observations which would otherwise make but a feeble or transient impression upon his mind. Nor is the ultimate benefit of this branch of study to be overlooked; for the advantages which have been derived from a knowledge of comparative anatomy, in illustrating many obscure points of physiology in the human system, have been felt and amply acknowledged; and, were great examples requisite to prove the truth of this assertion, we have only to mention the names of Blumenbach and John Hunter.

Natural Philosophy.—In the examinations on this subject, the student should be allowed to handle the models necessary for illustrating the doctrines delivered in the lectures; and to ascertain their powers, and the application of these, more minutely and familiarly than can be explained by the professor during the lectures. The utmost latitude of inquiry, by conversation with the teacher, should, also, be encouraged; and the ingenuity of the pupils be exercised in the forma-

tion of theories, the value of which should be determined by the teacher: besides which, the pupils should also be aided in any experiments which they may wish to make, even should these merely tend to prove truths which have already been sufficiently investigated.

The examinations on Natural Philosophy should be held twice a week, at least; and essays on the application of the principles of physics, in explaining the powers of the animal frame, should be required from the medical students.

CHEMISTRY. — This branch of science has been too long regarded rather as an accomplishment than as an object of primary importance to the medical practitioner: but no man who has attempted to study physiology without possessing a previous acquaintance with Chymistry has ever ceased to lament his neglect of that science. The practical physician is under equal obligations to Chymistry in the treatment of many diseases; and were it proper to bring forward particular proofs of the fact in this letter, it would be seen that not a step towards the improvements which have of late years distinguished the profession could have been made without it. It is true that Chymical theories of diseased action have, on the other hand, sometimes misled the practitioner; but these are not likely to occur, when men become as well instructed with respect to the laws of chymical

action as they are with the functions of the living body, and, consequently, able to discriminate how much is due to both, in the changes which are constantly operating in the animal system. Besides, as has been justly remarked by an enlightened physician, speaking of the general advancement of knowledge, "What will become of the medical practitioner unless he keep pace with the general progress? It is obvious that he must lose his place in the scale of society, and the credit and respectability of the profession must sink. The mere mechanic will be the better man, and he will look down with contempt upon the physician or the apothecary, who, being ignorant in Chymistry, must, as his reading will have informed him, be ignorant in the most essential parts of his avocation."*

Every pupil should be obliged to attend two courses of lectures on Chymistry; during the continuance of both of which, examinations should be held in the laboratory; and as Chymistry is truly an experimental science, the students of the second course should be exercised in experiments, and should assist in the actual operations of the science, under the guidance of an operator or assistant to the professor. Without such exercises in the manipulations of the laboratory, Chymistry, particularly as far as regards its con-

* Paris's Elements of Medical Chemistry, preface, p. xiii.

nexion with physiology and medicine, can never be perfectly acquired; and, although much may be done with a very small apparatus, a few flasks, tubes, and phials, yet many students have not the opportunity of employing the smallest that can be useful, should they even have the means of acquiring it.

PHYSIOLOGY and PHYTOLOGY.—Besides the lectures on these branches of science, and examinations, the pupils should be required to write essays on such parts of both as may be fixed upon for that purpose by the professor; and should new methods of investigation suggest themselves, the means of pursuing these should be afforded to the pupil.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY.—In prosecuting this branch of study, it is not necessary for the medical student to enter upon that part of it which refers to ethics; but in those lectures of which the philosophy of mind forms the subject, a strict attendance should be imperatively enforced, and the proficiency of the pupil be ascertained by examinations, as in the studies already enumerated.

MATERIA MEDICA and PHARMACY.—These practical branches of medical science cannot be properly taught without the aid of an ample collection of specimens and preparations, which should be always accessible to the student, who might be encouraged to read in the museum; and Phar-

macy being an operative art, he should be obliged to assist in the preparation of the chymical remedies. The attendance, indeed, on this class should be equivalent to an apprenticeship, and therefore the pupils ought to be taught, practically, the method of compounding extemporaneous prescriptions.

In the examinations, the student should be required not only to name and to describe the qualities and properties of the various articles placed before him, but to point out the good from the bad specimens of every drug; for, although the skill of the physician may enable him to grapple successfully with disease, and avert the threatened blow of the destroyer, yet his efforts will be of little avail if the arms which he must wield be blunted or in bad condition. He should also be exercised in the art of detecting adulterations both of the natural productions which are articles of the Materia Medica, and of the artificial compounds; and be intimately acquainted with the reciprocal action which they exert upon one another. Many excellent physicians know so little of the composition of drugs, that they occasionally expose themselves to be severely criticised by apothecaries and druggists, on account of the incompatible materials which they order to be mixed together in the same prescriptions; but this could never occur if pharmaceutical operations

were to become a necessary part in every medical education.

Pathology and the Practice of Medicine.—As Physiology teaches the knowledge of the functions which regulate the body in a sound or healthy state, so Pathology considers those in a morbid condition, and, consequently, developes the causes and symptoms of diseases. Pathology is, indeed, so intimately connected with the practice of medicine, that, without having previously studied it, an acquaintance with remedies would only mislead the practitioner; it may, however, be advantageously combined with the study of the practice, which is in truth the application of pathology; and as I have proposed that Physiology be taught in a distinct course of lectures, I have not thought it necessary to propose any course on what has been termed the Institutions of Medicine. But Pathology combined with the Practice of Medicine, undoubtedly the most important portion of medical education, and to which all the other studies have reference, cannot be properly taught without the assistance of a clinical hospital. I am ignorant whether the formation of such an establishment has been contemplated in the plan of the New University, and I cannot attempt to advise such a step to be hazarded in the first instance; but undoubtedly some measures should be adopted for obtaining those practical means of

instruction which a clinical ward alone affords, so essential in teaching this branch of medical study. Two plans might be suggested; either a small hospital should be attached to the university, for the sole purpose of clinical instruction; or terms should be entered into with some of the already existing hospitals, to set apart a ward for the use of the University, over which the medical professors of that establishment should preside, and which should be open only to its students. Both of these suggestions have their conveniences and their inconveniences. Let us take a separate view of each, and of the manner in which they should be managed, allowing that both are practicable.

Let us first suppose that an hospital could be attached to the University. What should its character be; and how could it be supplied with such patients as would be required, from time to time, to illustrate the progressive lectures on the practice of medicine? In my opinion, such an hospital should consist of four wards only; two for the reception of purely medical cases, and two for accidents and surgical cases. The surgical wards I shall notice in their proper place: of those for the reception of the cases of general disease, or medical cases, as they are usually termed, I would propose that one, which should be termed the *clinical ward*, should be of moderate dimensions, for the reception of cases of those diseases

on which the professor of the practice of medicine is at the time lecturing. Thus, if fever be the subject of his discourses, cases of the genera and species of that class of diseases only should be found in the clinical ward; and, for the same reason, specimens of each class of diseases should successively be found there, during the session; whilst the other, which should be the larger ward, should receive those cases which are still under treatment, although no longer required in the clinical ward, and those which have not been yet received into it. The treatment of the cases in the clinical ward should not be confined to one physician; but all the medical professors should be required to attend that ward, in turn, for a given period; and during that term to deliver daily a clinical lecture, immediately after the visitation of the ward. These visits should be made in the morning, as is the case in the Parisian hospitals, before any of the lectures commence; the patients being then more able to bear the intrusion and noise of the pupils, none of whom should be permitted to repeat his visit to the ward on the same day, unless he be appointed to superintend a case by the physician; which should be a part of the duty of each student who is attending a second course of the lectures on the practice of medicine: the pupil should be required, also, to write a statement of the case, and the rationale of

its treatment. The detail of the symptoms and the progress of the cases in this ward, as well as of their treatment, should be declared aloud by the visiting physician, and entered in the case-book of every student.

The principal inconvenience attending this plan would arise from the difficulty of procuring the succession of cases at the time they are required; and the prejudices which might be raised against the hospital, from an idea that the treatment of the cases was altogether experimental. The first-mentioned difficulty might be surmounted by forming an arrangement with the already established hospitals to supply the cases required in the University Hospital, from among the daily applications made to them; and the second would cease as soon as the public saw, that every case received as much attention, and was as rapidly cured, as in the other hospitals. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that in selecting cases for a clinical ward, all those of an extraordinary or an uncommon nature should be rejected. The time of a pupil would be idly dissipated in observing cases which present symptoms that perhaps have never occurred before, and which may never present themselves again: the characteristics of diseases of every-day occurrence, which distinguish them from one another, are those with which he requires to become ac-

quainted; and these, so far from being accurately ascertained, still present an extensive field for the exercise of observation and talent.

But, as I have already supposed, the building an hospital expressly for the purposes of the University may be considered impracticable; and therefore a ward must be obtained in some one of the existing hospitals. The nearer to the University such a ward can be procured the better; but, wherever it is, the same plan respecting the admission of cases, and the attendance both of the professors and the pupils, as I have suggested for the University hospital, should be adopted.

During the clinical lecture, the more advanced of the students should be called upon by the physician to give a prognostic of the probable issue of any of the cases which he may fix upon for that purpose; and to state the grounds on which their opinion is founded. In the examinations also on this branch of their studies, which should take place at least twice a week, cases should be detailed by the professor, and the students should be required to name the diseases, and to state the treatment requisite for the mitigation or the removal of the symptoms. Experience, which is the foundation of all knowledge in medicine, must rest either on the evidence of our own senses, or on the testimony of others. It is on the former that the phy-

sician chiefly relies; but the pupil who has the opportunity of seeing the instructions of a lecturer on Pathology and the Practice of Medicine illustrated by cases in a clinical ward, enjoys every advantage that both kinds of testimony can afford. It is by such a mode of teaching only that he can be guarded against those metaphysical and chimerical hypotheses which have always corrupted, and which still continue to deform every branch of medicine: and, thus instructed at the bed-side, he acquires early such habits of observation and of discrimination, as will enable him to commence the actual practice of his profession with a confidence in himself, and a satisfaction to the mind, which I do not hesitate to affirm is now rarely felt, except by practitioners of some years' standing.

There is, indeed, no other method of conveying to the student a knowledge of many facts connected with diseases and the operations of remedies than that which I have proposed. In what language, for example, can the appearances of the countenance, the variations of the voice, the circumstances connected with different states of breathing, nervous susceptibility, and degrees of strength, be described? These states of the habit must be seen to be understood, and can never be communicated, even by those who know them best.

SURGERY.—If clinical wards be necessary for teaching properly the practice of medicine, they are even more essential for conveying instruction in surgery, as far as this is an operative art. The arrangements, however, in these wards, and a succession of cases similar to those in the medical wards, could not be expected. But the students should, as is the custom in all hospitals, be employed as dressers, instructed in the application of bandages, and intrusted, in due time, to perform minor operations, under the inspection of the professor of surgery. The examinations on Surgery, as on Anatomy, should be over the dead body, on which the more advanced students should be required to perform operations, and to demonstrate the various steps in each operation, and to explain the reasons for taking them, to the junior pupils. They should be examined also upon the medical management of surgical cases; for I never can assent to the proposition that surgery should be confined to a set of men who are merely operators; or that "the art would be more quickly brought to perfection by such men." The mechanical skill, resolution, and steady hand of the operator should be united with the information requisite in an able physician, to constitute a good surgeon; and whether the student be intended to practise as a physician or a sur-

geon, the same course of studies should be enforced.

Obstetrical Surgery and Medicine.—In this branch of study much information is communicated by means of a machine or lay figure; but the art of the accoucheur cannot be properly acquired unless the pupil have the opportunity of attending cases; a circumstance which could only be attained by an arrangement with some of the charitable lying-in institutions. The examinations should be conducted in the same manner as those on the Practice of Medicine.

Medical Jurisprudence.—Besides the lectures and regular examinations on this important part of medical study, the pupils should have opportunities afforded to them of trying the effects of poisons on the lower animals, and be exercised in the investigations necessary for detecting poisons in every part of the animal body. They should also be examined judicially, in supposed cases of insanity, suicide, infanticide, and murder, accustom them to deliver themselves with propriety when examined in a court of justice respecting real cases of a similar kind.

This part of medicine has lately very deservedly attracted much of the attention of the profession; and certainly nothing can be more beneficial to the interests of the public than that it should be properly taught. If the New Uni-

versity look for a model for instruction in any of the branches of learning to be pursued within its walls in existing establishments, many on this subject worthy of imitation will be found both in France and Germany.

Nothing requires to be said, in this place, on the subject of MEDICAL ETHICS, which does not admit of examinations, and which can be taught fully in lectures.

Such is the plan of medical education which I presume to offer for your consideration, as the council of the University of London. I have purposely stated my ideas as briefly as possible; knowing, that in writing to men of high attainments and sound judgments, prolix details are unnecessary, and would not be read. I have not the vanity to suppose that my plan is either unexceptionable, or likely to be wholly adopted; but I am sanguine enough to hope that it may be the means of directing your attention to examine more closely the subject of medical education than might otherwise have been the case. It may induce you to solicit the opinions of men high in the profession on the subject; and, as "in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom," so in the multitude of plans presented to you, one may be framed fully adequate for the purpose. Nothing will contribute more to place the celebrity of the New University, as a school

of medicine, on an immovable basis, than the formation of such a plan; and, with the aid of able teachers, to crowd its class-rooms with students from every quarter of the globe. The beneficial effects to the public will be incalculable, as an efficient plan of education cannot fail to advance Medical Science at least a century before its present situation.

I have not taken into consideration many minor circumstances connected with the study of medicine, and, among others, the necessity of patronising a medical society within the walls of the University of London. Nothing contributes more to excite emulation, and rouse the energies of young men, than societies constituted of their fellow-students. In these meetings their opinions are canvassed by their cotemporaries with all the minuteness of severe criticism: young men thus find their level; and, being taught to appreciate justly their own powers, the vanity of the bold and arrogant is humbled; whilst the diffidence of modest and retiring genius is encouraged to advance and assume the rank which it merits. The experience of nearly a century may be brought forward in confirmation of this opinion. In the medical society of the students of the University of Edinburgh, some of the most important doctrines which have been agitated, both in physiology and in medicine,

were brought forward: there Fordyce, Brown, Cullen, Black, Monro, Macbride, Darwin, Beddoes, and Currie, first promulgated their opinions:* and, in another profession the eloquence of some of your own body, which has riveted the attention, and commanded the admiration of the world, was first essayed in the speculative society of that university.

Before closing this letter, I cannot avoid expressing my anticipations of the general success of the University of London. Its establishment, as far as medicine is concerned, is likely to form a proud and memorable era in the history of that science; and looking forward with an eye undoubtedly too feeble to pierce the cloud which veils the events of coming years, I may, yet dare to anticipate the perfection of a profession so essential to the happiness of the human race.

I have practised my profession more than twenty-six years, during which time I have beheld with deep regret, men dignified with the title of Physician countenancing the most absurd pretended remedies; — animal magnetism,—metallic tractors,—balsams,—balms, and latterly white mustard seed; and although I cannot expect to see that happy period, when the worms of Quackery shall cease to batten on the carcass of credulity, and bold and

* The Medical Society of Edinburgh was established in 1737.

impudent pretenders to go forth, like the ancient Scythians, to kill from their chariots; yet I hope to behold that day, when physicians and practitioners of every grade, disdaining all artifice, and feeling no interest separate and distinct from the honour of the profession, shall depend for success on their real merit. "Homines ad Deos nullâ re propius accedunt quàm salutem hominibus dando."

I remain, my Lords and Gentlemen,

Your humble Servant,

A. T. THOMSON.

THE END.

LONDON: PRINTED AT THE TEMPLE PRINTING OFFICE,
BY J. MOYES, BOUVERIE STREET.

A LECTURE

ON THE USES OF

ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

IN

VARIOUS BRANCHES

OF

KNOWLEDGE,

DELIVERED

ON MONDAY, THE 1ST OF NOVEMBER, 1824,

BY

JAMES MACARTNEY, M.D. F.R.S. F.L.S. M.R.I.A.

PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY AND SURGERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN; MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF LONDON, HONORARY FELLOW OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS IN IRELAND; MEMBER OF THE SOCIETE MEDICALE D'EMULATION OF PARIS; HONORARY MEMBER OF THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK; ETC.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN AND CO., LONDON; AND HODGES AND M'ARTHUR, DUBLIN, BY R. GRAISBERRY.

1826.

"For a man to know himself properly, it is scarcely enough that he knows his own name."—SOCRATES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Circumstances have taken place, which have induced me to lay before the Public, my first Lecture in *the year* 1824, in the very words in which it was delivered; and likewise, to subjoin the Notes employed for the concluding Lecture of the same Session, which, although mere heads, may be sufficient to shew the nature and tendency of that Lecture.

LECTURE, &c.

I SHOULD wish to take advantage of the presence of so mixt an audience, to point out the uses and application of Anatomy and Physiology in the explanation of several branches of knowledge, besides Medicine and Surgery.

In proportion as the various arts and sciences have advanced in improvement, they have been found capable of explaining each other. The more also they have been made use of, for the purpose of mutual illustration, the more their natural relations have been discovered. The expansive power of steam was long known as a simple and unproductive fact in Natural Philosophy, but by the application of this power to Mechanics, the most stupendous effects have been the result. Already it is calculated, that the steam machinery of England performs more labor or possesses more strength, than the adult population of the whole world. These extraordinary means of multiplying the mechanic power of man, are likely to produce, indirectly, still more import-

ant effects on the state of society and the moral character of the human race. Whether men may thus be made better or happier, is perhaps reserved for the progress of time to unfold; but that a new mode of labor, and a facility in transmitting goods, persons, and opinions to all parts of the earth, must sooner or later, change the entire frame of society, seems to be beyond all doubt.

If the employment of a single principle of inorganic matter can lead to such extraordinary results, it is not unreasonable to expect that the laws which determine the actions and powers of all living beings, may admit of many very important applications.

I shall endeavour, by a few examples, to shew the utility of a knowledge of Anatomy and Physiology in *Theology*,—*Natural History*,—*Geology*,—*Natural Philosophy*,—*the Fine Arts*,—some parts of *Moral Science*, and *the Art of Healing*.

Several works have been written to prove from the structure of living bodies the existence of design and goodness in the Creation, and certainly no subject could be chosen which is so fit for this purpose; for the Anatomy and Physiology of animals, and vegetables, are throughout, but the history of means adapted to fulfil certain ends. Some of these books have been written by good Anatomists and Naturalists. For instance, Ray's Wisdom of

God in the Creation, was an excellent book on Natural History at the time it was published. Lesser's Insecto-theology contains more information on the anatomy and habits of Insects than many works which have been more lately written; and Swammerdam's great work on the Anatomy of Insects is interspersed throughout with reflexions on the wisdom of the Creator, suggested by the wonderful and curious structure of the minute animals he dissected. The most popular work on this subject is Dr. Paley's Natural Theology, a book which has gone through 19 editions in 17 years, and is read and quoted by every Divine.

This author appears to have compiled his work altogether at second hand, and without any knowledge of Anatomy and Physiology derived from actual observation; and the consequence has been, that he has fallen into many very great errors respecting the structure and uses of parts. I could quote many passages in his book to prove this, but I shall take one which is particularly strong.

"For the *ball and socket joint*, beside the "membrane already described, there is in some "important joints, as an additional security, a "short, strong, yet flexible ligament, inserted "by one end into the head of the ball, by the "other into the bottom of the cup; which liga- "ment keeps the two parts of the joint so firmly

" in their place, that none of the motions which
" the limb naturally performs, none of the jerks
" and twists to which it is ordinarily liable,
" nothing less indeed than the utmost and the
" most unnatural violence, can pull them asun-
" der. It is hardly imaginable, how great a
" force is necessary, even to stretch, still more
" to break, this ligament; yet so flexible is it,
" as to oppose no impediment to the suppleness
" of the joint. By its situation also, it is inac-
" cessible to injury from sharp edges. As it
" cannot be ruptured (such is its strength); so
" it cannot be cut, except by an accident which
" would sever the limb. If I had been permitted
" to frame a proof of contrivance, such as might
" satisfy the most distrustful inquirer, I know
" not whether I could have chosen an example
" of mechanism more unequivocal, or more
" free from objection, than this ligament. Noth-
" ing can be more mechanical; nothing, how-
" ever subservient to the safety, less capable of
" being generated by the action of the joint. I
" would particularly solicit the reader's atten-
" tion to this provision, as it is found in the
" head of the *thigh-bone*; to its strength, its
" structure, and its use. It is an instance upon
" which I lay my hand. One single fact, weighed
" by a mind in earnest, leaves oftentimes the
" deepest impression. For the purpose of ad-
" dressing different understandings and different

" apprehensions,—for the purpose of sentiment, " for the purpose of exciting admiration of the " Creator's works, we diversify our views, we " multiply examples; but for the purpose of " strict argument, one clear instance is sufficient; " and not only sufficient, but capable perhaps of " generating a firmer assurance than what can " arise from a divided attention."

This joint owes none of its security to the round ligament, but to a much better contrivance. The great mass of muscles which surrounds the bone, preserves it in its place so firmly, that in all the common positions and actions of the body, it would be almost impossible to dislocate the bone when these muscles are on their guard. The deep socket figure of the joint permits all the necessary motions with the surfaces always in contact. Even the attraction of these surfaces is capable of keeping the head of the thigh bone in its socket, in defiance of the strength of two men, after all the muscles are removed, and the capsule of the articulation is cut all round, as I have lately ascertained by experiment. Dr. Paley has fallen into the error common with persons unacquainted with physiology—that of supposing the body to be formed on mechanical principles; and in many places he describes its structure as if it were a common piece of machinery. It is however only those who

study the laws of life, that can estimate and admire as they ought, the wonderful contrivance of the animal body. It is evident, therefore, that the more correctly a Divine is informed respecting anatomy and physiology, the more effectually will he employ this knowledge, as an argument in favour of Natural Religion. With such views, several persons intending to take orders have regularly studied anatomy in this school.

The first steps in *Natural History* were to notice and record the general appearance of animals and plants; but when a great number of species came to be discriminated, it was necessary to establish for them more precise characters. The best and most natural classifications of animals and plants—those which give the arrangements most suited to their habits and properties, are founded on internal structure. It is universally acknowledged at present, that no person can make any progress in natural history, unless he be acquainted with the anatomy and physiology of the objects of his research.

With the extraordinary talents for order and arrangement possessed by the celebrated Linneus, it is not likely that his classification would ever have been superseded, if he had raised it on the basis of anatomy. If he had been guided by this rule, he never would have

placed the Bat in the same order with Man and the Monkey; neither would he have associated, as he has done, the fleet and graceful Horse, the unwieldy Hippopotamus, and the uncouth Tapir. He placed the Seal and Walrus in separate orders, and with other animals in no way allied to them.

I shall contrast some of the Orders of the first Class of animals, as established by modern naturalists on the basis of a general agreement in internal structure; and you will find they form natural families with respect to the habits and economy of the animals.

The *Quadrumanous* order of Mammalia contains the *monkey* tribe and the *Lemurs*. Their mode of progression, and almost all their movements, are necessarily similar, from the circumstance of the posterior extremities being formed and used as hands.

The *Cheiropterous* order, in which the *bats* alone should be placed, have the bones of the fingers extended in the membraneous wing. Their habits are very peculiar, and unlike those of both other beasts and birds. The structure of the wing is such as to enable them to discern their approach to any foreign bodies; and hence they can fly with great rapidity at night, and even after their eyes are put out, they avoid all obstructions.

The *Plantigrade* quadrupeds are those that walk on the sole of the foot. These animals

live in obscurity. Many of them are dormant during the winter, and subsist on mixed food. The genera are the *hedgehog*, *shrew*, *mole*, and *bear*.

The *Tardigrade* quadrupeds are so called from their extraordinary and slow motion. Their anterior extremities are longer than the others.

The *Digitigrade* order tread on their toes, never hibernate, are most watchful during the night, and naturally subsist on animal food. They are the well known beasts of prey.

The *Saltigrade* mammalia have the hind limbs longer and stronger than the anterior ones, and hence the leaping gait from which the name is derived. They are distinguished by the front teeth being formed for gnawing hard vegetable substances. They are in general timid, and pursued by other animals. They are prolific, and several species sleep during the winter. As examples of this order, we may mention the *hare*, *squirrel*, *beaver*, *mouse*, &c.

The *Hoofed* quadrupeds, by being divided into the *many hoofed*, the *two hoofed* or *cloven footed*, and the *single hoofed* or *solid footed*, produce three extremely natural orders of animals.

The *Finned* or *Pinnated* mammalia form also three natural families, according to the gradations in the structure of their extremities:—

1st, the *Nectopoda*, with feet fitted rather for swimming than walking; these are the *seal* and *walrus* kind: 2dly, the *Cryptopoda* have the posterior limbs involved in the tail; of such the *lamantin* is an example: and, 3dly, the *Cetacea* or *whale* tribe, in which, bones analogous to those of the arm and hand are clothed so as to make a fin for swimming. The posterior extremities are obliterated, and the general figure of the body being adapted altogether for a residence in the sea, they are ranked amongst Fishes by persons uninformed in natural history. Their internal structure is, however, very different from that of fishes; and they possess the classific distinction of mammalia, by suckling their young, for whom they display the most extraordinary degree of attachment.

It is to be regretted that we have no compendious and popular classification of animals, according to their anatomical structure and economy, in the English language. My classification is only published in Rees' Cyclopædia, and was printed with many typographical errors; and Baron Cuvier's last work on the Animal Kingdom, a translation of which is undertaken, is very complicated, and loaded with useless nomenclature.

Geology may be considered a new science, and one which would prove one of the most interesting that could engage the human mind,

if sufficient data were ascertained, by which could be formed a satisfactory history of the globe we inhabit. That part of geology which relates to the remains of animals in a fossil state, has received great elucidation from the labors of Baron Cuvier, the celebrated French anatomist. He has been for many years engaged in collecting specimens of fossil bones, and in comparing them with the extensive collection of skeletons under his direction at Paris. He has succeeded in establishing several genera, of which no species at present exist on the earth; and many species, of which the genera only remain amongst us. Excellent models have been made of skeletons of these animals, as far as they have been obtained; one set of which Baron Cuvier, has very liberally sent over here. *(Some of these specimens were shewn.)*

There is little doubt that future researches into the strata of the earth, in various parts of the world, must lead to very interesting discoveries. Perhaps, in some unexplored region, fossil remains of the human race may be detected. At present it is the opinion of Cuvier, that there is no genuine specimen of either the human subject or the monkey kind in a fossil state. I have had an opportunity of seeing one of the reputed fossil human skeletons, found at Guadaloupe. The rock which enclosed it was evidently of late formation, and the bones were not in a fossil state. *(Here a piece of the rock was*

exhibited.) In the Anatomical Collection at Rotterdam there is a mineral substance which is shewn as a petrified child. I brought a small fragment of it, and had it analysed by Dr. Barker, when it proved to be gypsum, and was probably shaped by art.

The uses of Anatomy in *Natural Philosophy* are chiefly to be found with regard to the eye and ear :—The eye is a complicated optical instrument, calculated to modify the transmission of light with more delicacy, and under more various circumstances, than any which human invention has produced : nay, I am persuaded, that although the organ of vision may be easy to describe, it never could have entered into the mind of man to conceive its structure without having seen it. The provisions in the eye of different animals for regulating the admission of light, the adaptation of its refracting power in different media, and the momentary changes of its form for the vision of near or distant objects, are some of the most interesting points of physiology, and are evidently connected with the science of *Optics*.

The possibility of the functions of this organ being carried on, not merely without the presence of transparent humors, but by means of dark and solid parts, as in the eyes of insects, is a fact at present quite unexplained ; and perhaps may yet be the means of unfolding some

important part of the history of the ætherial fluid. (*Preparations and plates of the eyes of insects were exhibited.*)

The organ of hearing varies in different animals also, according to the circumstances in which its functions are to be exercised, all these varieties are founded on the general laws for the transmission of sound, through different vibrating substances. These laws therefore cannot fail to derive elucidation from a knowledge of the mechanism of the ear.

Amongst the Fine Arts we may mention *Sculpture*, *Painting*, and *Rhetoric*, as being aided by a knowledge of Anatomy.

The chief object in *Sculpture* and *Painting* being to represent form, attitudes, and states of action, when living figures are imitated, it is evident, that the successful practice of these arts requires a very intimate knowledge of the shape and positions of the different muscles of the body, and of the changes produced in the form of these muscles by the various actions they have to execute. It is generally believed, that the celebrated artists of Greece were well acquainted with this part of anatomy. Indeed I think many of the ancient statues gives full evidence of it. So necessary is the connexion of sculpture and painting with anatomy, that the cultivation of these arts for the decoration of the

early Christian churches led to the revival of anatomy after the dark ages. The anatomical sketches of Leonardo da Vinci, which are preserved in the King's collection of drawings, would not disgrace any anatomist of the present day.

Although all the modern academies of sculpture and painting have a professorship of anatomy, and in many the pupils regularly perform dissections, there are few modern artists who bestow as much labor on the subject of anatomy as it requires. The great defect in the sculpture and painting of the later times, is a want of knowledge of the actions of the muscles in the living body. It is no doubt extremely difficult, and can alone result from close observation and long study. The slightest motions of one part of the body more or less influence the position and the contour of the whole figure. It is very rare indeed to see the attitude faithfully displayed throughout. Some, even of the most celebrated statues, both ancient and modern, are defective in what might be called the harmony of attitude.

In the Farnese Hercules there is not a suitable difference observed between the swelling of these mucles, which the attitude of the figure requires to be in action, and those at rest. In Canova's deservedly admired statue of Venus, the same faults exist in a slight degree. In

the fine piece of sculpture of Provost Baldwin's death, which is in the Examination Hall of the College, and which was executed, I believe, by an Irish artist, the weeping figure shews a great want of anatomical knowledge. The arm which sustains the head, exhibits the flexor muscles of the upper arm in a degree of action which they could not possess, consistently with the resting position of the elbow on the knee. Even the Belvidere Apollo is not exempt from the error of representing several muscles too tamely for the attitude; but it must be admitted, that the artist seemed to have designedly wished to represent his conception of a god, more than the real form of a man. Amongst all the ancient statues, there is perhaps none which displays so much of nature, both in the attitude and the expression of the face, as the crouching Venus. Although the features possess the utmost regularity, there is as much countenance as could be produced with all the aid of colouring. The ancient figure of Comedy also possesses the merit of natural expression in a very high degree. The statue of the Gladiator, although the attitude is one very unusual, and difficult to maintain for any length of time, exhibits every muscle in its proper degree of action. The most perfect anatomy is seen in most of the Elgin Marbles. There is a modern statue of the Honourable

Mrs. Damer, executed by herself, and placed in the British Museum, which possesses great merit. which is to be accounted for by the pains she bestowed on the study of anatomy. This lady was instructed by the late Mr. Cruikshank, and produced some sculpture of dissected muscles which shewed very familiar acquaintance with the subject.

In Count Algarotti's essay on painting, the necessity of understanding anatomy is strongly insisted on in these words:

" To ask if the study of Anatomy is requi-
" site to a painter, is the same thing as to ask
" if, in order to learn any science, a man must
" first make himself acquainted with the prin-
" ciples of it. It would be throwing away time
" to cite, in confirmation of this truth, the
" authorities of the antient masters, and the
" most celebrated schools. A man, who is
" not acquainted with the form and construc-
" tion of the several bones which support and
" govern the human frame, and does not know
" in what manner the muscles moving these
" bones are fixed to them, can make nothing
" of what appears of them through the in-
" teguments with which they are covered; and
" which appearance is, however, the noblest
" object of the pencil. It is impossible
" for a painter to copy faithfully what he
" sees, unless he thoroughly understands it.

" Let him employ ever so much time and " study in the attempt, it cannot but be at- " tended with many and great mistakes ; just " as it must happen to a man who undertakes " to copy something in a language which he " does not understand, or to translate into " his own, what has been written in another, " upon a subject with which he is not ac- " quainted."

The want of anatomical knowledge greatly detracts from the general merits of several distinguished painters. It appears in those instances where the limbs are seen, as the artists term it, foreshortened. The ancient painters were singularly happy in producing all possible positions of the parts of the body. Some moderns, however, have failed in accomplishing the same. This part of painting is considered the perspective of the human body; but it is plain that, in designing various attitudes, the success will chiefly depend upon knowing the forms the muscles assume in these various attitudes.

The late Mr. Fuseli enjoyed the talent for designing in an eminent degree, and used to boast of his practical knowledge of anatomy : yet in representing difficult and foreshortened attitudes, it appears to me he often failed, which is perhaps to be explained by his yielding too much to an excentric imagination. (*Engravings of some of Mr. Fuseli's were here shewn.*)

It would not at first be expected that there was any connexion between Anatomy and *Rhetoric*. But when we consider that the most impressive actions of an orator have reference to the situation and the functions of internal organs, it must appear that he will be aided in his choice of those actions, by knowing the principles on which they came to be employed. Why does a person in perplexity and distraction of mind, as to purpose, apply the hands to the fore part of the head? or why, when it is intended to express truth and sincerity of feeling, does he press his hand to the middle region of the trunk of the body? Anatomy and Physiology can alone answer the questions. These rhetorical actions are not arbitrary or conventional; not the result of custom or imitation. The reasons for their being suitable and natural cannot, however, be fully shewn, without entering at considerable length into the arrangement and functions of the nervous system. But it may be briefly stated at present, that there are two centres or foci (if I may use the expression,) of the nervous system. The brain is one, and has direct communication with all the nerves of sense, or those which maintain the relation between the individual and the external world. The other focus occupies the central situation of the body, is connected with these nerves that are distributed to the internal organs, and never in

a natural state receives any impressions from external bodies. When the intellectual operations are actively carried on, we feel an increased sensibility in the brain; and when the affections are excited, peculiar sensations are felt in the situation of the centre of the visceral nerves;—hence we naturally and properly refer, by some action of the hands, to one or other of these situations. Players, and more especially actresses, are apt to place the hand too high, and too much to the left side, thinking that they ought to refer to that part of the body where the heart is felt to beat; and I have sometimes seen them, in order to vary the action, or when the right hand was tired, apply the left hand to the right side of the chest. Miss O'Neill shewed more judgment on this point than other performers.*

It is said that the orators of Greece and Rome studied the propriety and fitness of action much

* Actors almost universally represent erroneously the act of dying, and the condition of the body immediately after death. When persons die in consequence of great injury, there is less of struggle or convulsion than we usually see exhibited on the stage; and when death is really the result of mental agitation or excessive passion, no effort or struggle is made, but the person sinks as in fainting. Players usually represent the dead person as becoming instantly "the stiffened corse;" whereas some time is required, in any case, for the dead body to become rigid: and when death is occasioned either by over exertion or strong mental feeling, the muscles never become firm, and the body continues flexible and soft, until dissolution takes place.

more than is done at present. Public speakers, at present, not unusually think it is only necessary to shew vehemence or excitement, and no doubt the appearance of earnestness has great effects on an audience for the moment; but propriety of delivery, like soundness of argument, leaves a lasting impression. Mr. Thelwal is the only orator I know, who has applied the knowledge of anatomy and physiology to the management of the inflexions of the voice, and the gestures of the body; and he has been proportionably successful, both with respect to his own delivery, and the instruction of others in public speaking, although he was not, I believe, originally distinguished by any natural talent for oratory.

I have said that anatomy and physiology are capable of being advantageously employed in the illustration of various branches of *Moral Science*. Physiology and Psychology or the doctrine of mind, are intimately connected; they are truly parts of the same subject—the science of living nature. No person can be considered a competent physiologist, who is unacquainted with mental phenomena, and the never ceasing influence of mind on body; nor can any person, in my opinion, form a correct judgment of the intellectual powers, the moral sentiments, and the propensities of living beings, without understanding the nature of the

instruments by which ideas are acquired, and of those internal organs whose operations are continually exciting or modifying mental feeling. Perhaps no person has yet examined, how far human thoughts and human actions might be traced to the secret influence of internal organs, producing wants, desires, and tendencies. We see the operations of mind and body inseparably united in the same individual; how then can the history of those operations be successfully studied apart from each other? To shew by example, the advantages of combining the studies of psychology and physiology would be easy, but would require us to enter more into detail on those subjects, than the time at present would permit.* I may ob-

* Since the printing of this lecture commenced, I have thought that it would be both interesting and useful to examine briefly the relation which exists between the organization and the dispositions and character of living beings.

If we meet with an animal furnished with lacerating teeth and strong jaws, or with sharp claws and muscular limbs, we hesitate not to conclude, that the creature is cruel and predaceous: on the other hand, if we discover one with the stomach and teeth suited to the conversion of vegetable matters, or unprovided with any natural weapons, or enclosed in a defensive covering, we are equally certain that the dispositions of such an animal are timid and gentle, and that its habit is to seek peace by retirement, or to purchase safety by flight.

The human being is distinguished from all others, by the possession of intellectual faculties, which qualify him for the loftiest attainments; and at the same time he has a form so

serve that those who have written on the philosophy of mind, have generally thought it necessary to give an account of the functions of

feeble, so undefended, and so prone to disease, that he is compelled from his necessities, his wants, his instincts, his passions, and his reason, to seek aid from others, and to communicate assistance in return.

A state of society, therefore, varying according to the degree of knowledge possessed by the individuals composing it, is the necessary result of the organization and the faculties of man: for, in those few instances recorded of human beings living in a solitary and isolated manner, like the inferior animals, (which has been absurdly supposed by some to be the state of nature,) it has always been found, that such individuals were so far deficient in intellect, as to be totally incapable of education; in short, that they were natural ideots of the lowest order.

No state of human society can exist, however simple, without a general recognition of a rule of moral conduct. It is useful to consider the origin of the general agreement amongst mankind, as to what is right and wrong, which some persons, from not inquiring into, have supposed to be a selfish convention made for mutual benefit.

The first operation of the human mind is perception, or what perhaps might be more properly called a consciousness of feeling. Very few sensations can be produced, without establishing a distinction between those which are agreeable and those which are the contrary; and, as a matter of necessity in a sentient being, the desire or will to repeat the first, and avoid the latter. A small share of experience is required to teach us, that other sensitive beings are similarly affected with ourselves, under similar circumstances. This knowledge cannot exist without some reflection on the feelings of others, in the mind of every human being who is not a natural and perfect idiot.

The perception of what is good for others, as well as for ourselves, is therefore unavoidable; and we cannot deliberately

the nervous system, and of the organs of sense. This, however, has been frequently very incorrectly done. For instance, what can be more

injure another, without knowing we are doing that which we would not wish to be done unto us. This brief process of reasoning is exhibited very early in life. We see even infants offer sweet things to grown people, and cling to their nurses, because experience has taught that such acts are pleasant to themselves. We often also hear children appeal to this kind of knowledge, when the conduct of their playfellows is inconsiderately opposed to it. Thus they will say, "How would *you* like it, if *I* had taken *your* cake, or top, or doll, &c."

The human imagination naturally leads us to place ourselves in the situation of other beings capable of feeling as we do, and hence arise our sympathies with the happiness or suffering of those around us, and even with the fictitious representations of joy or grief.

This law of our nature is not confined to the mind, but extends to many bodily feelings and actions. Some persons cannot see blood, or witness a surgical operation, without fainting; and I have generally observed, that such persons have great fortitude in sustaining pain, when inflicted on themselves. So strongly is the feeling of sympathy implanted in the human heart, that persons have expired during the exhibition of torture, which even the victim survived.

Moral judgment and moral sentiment are, therefore, natural attributes of man, and are the necessary result of his organization, his reason, and his imagination.

It is true that different individuals possess different degrees of a moral sense, as their organization and the original constitution of their minds may differ. Some enjoy an intensity of moral feeling, of which others seem not to be susceptible; and some appear to be naturally deficient in the power of taking the place of others by an act of the imagination, and therefore have but little sympathy with the happiness or misery of those around

erroneous than Hartley's explanation of the successive trains of thought, or association of ideas, by vibrations and vibratiuncles (as he has termed them,) of the nerves?—parts which never do vibrate; and which, if placed in any situation where they could be made to vibrate, would no longer be capable of transmitting sensation.

The celebrated Locke expresses himself doubtingly and obscurely in speaking of the origin of ideas:—" If then external objects be

them; but it may not be asserting too much to say, that the generality of mankind would, under favorable circumstances, act with justice and benevolence; and if the overwhelming influence of the many on the few were rightly directed, it is difficult to conceive that any would be found to resist its power.

The tendency to imitation is so strong in the human mind, that, except children, very few can be said to think, act, or feel for themselves; and hence the diversity in the opinions, customs, and characters of different nations, although all are composed of individuals possessing similar faculties and natural propensities. Even the muscles of the body are so much disposed to imitate the actions we witness, that they sometimes disobey our will. Thus convulsive diseases are propagated from one person to many others. Particular species of insanity have also spread over large tracts of country, like a contagious disease; and it is generally understood, that persons with the strongest minds cannot safely associate with those who are insane.

If, therefore, man, who is universally admitted to be endowed with reason, can be so easily brought to depart from its guidance, the actual vices of the world furnish no argument against the sense of justice, and feeling of sympathy, which are as much a part of human nature as the faculty of reason.

" not united to our minds, when they produce " *ideas* in it; and yet we perceive *these original* " *qualities* in such of them as singly fall under " our senses, 'tis evident, that some motion " must be thence continued by our nerves, or " animal spirits, by some parts of our bodies, " to the brain, or the seat of sensation, there to " *produce in our minds the particular* ideas *we* " *have of them.* And since the extension, " figure, number, and motion of bodies of an " observable bigness, may be perceived at a " distance *by* the sight; 'tis evident, some " singly imperceptible bodies must come from " them to the eyes, and thereby convey to the " brain some *motion*, which produces these " *ideas* which we have of them in us."*

In the training of the young, and the controlling by laws the actions of adults, it is necessary to combine a knowledge of the original powers and capabilities of human nature, with observation on the conduct of mankind. There are general laws of vital action, which are the same whether they be applied to body or mind; for example, the tendency to imitation, the influence of habit, the effects of irritation, of constraint, of fatigue, *&c.* form some of the most interesting parts of physiology, as well as of the history of mind. It is admitted, that great improvements have been

* Sect. 12, Chap. 6.

made in modern times in education and government. It is true, many of them have been the result of accident, or have slowly grown out of experience; but still they are in reality only the application of the principles of physiology to the management of the human being.

Education may be said to consist of three parts, the cultivation of bodily health and vigour, the regulation of habits and temper, and the communication of knowledge. It is now ascertained that the best mode of promoting strength and activity of both mind and body, is to suffer the natural disposition to develope the power and growth of the young being, instead of attempting to force them by artificial excitement, or to control them by coercion. The knowledge of human nature would teach us, that every age is characterized by tendencies to actions and pursuits consistent with the organization of the body; and that, instead of producing premature and unnatural little men and women, the object of education should be to encourage in childhood the exercise of those faculties, which are active during the first periods of life, and postpone that of others, which belong to riper years. And what is found in practice to be true, might have been deduced from principle, namely, that nothing preserves or improves the temper and moral disposition,

or creates happiness, so much as occupation, which is consistent with the powers, instincts, and organization of the individual.

One of the great objects of *Legislation* is prevention of crimes, or those acts of individuals which are detrimental to society. This has been attempted in almost every country by punishments which occasion bodily pain, or by ignominy to produce mental suffering. It is not a little extraordinary, that the only rational and successful mode of punishment should have been discovered so late as the nineteenth century: namely, uninteresting labor, and restraint, administered with kindness. Of this nature is the punishment of the Tread-mill, after suffering which, I am informed by those who superintend it in various prisons, there has scarcely been an instance of any person being recommitted. The all subduing power of fatigue is well known to physiologists. It is employed, instead of force, to conquer the actions of muscles in the reduction of dislocated and broken bones. An unvaried sensation induces fatigue, as well as prolonged action of muscles, and tranquillizes the spirit so much, that the most ungovernable animal or man, by this mode of treatment, might be rendered so passive as scarcely to have any will or desire. I once knew a gentleman who had a horse, that, when travelling in a direction he did not

like, used to lie down with his rider. He was frequently subjected to the most severe chastisement without producing any effect on his disposition. At last his master thought of trying an experiment on him. The next time the horse played him this trick, having provided himself with ropes, he tied the horse's four legs together, and left him in this situation during a whole night, which had the effect of perfectly curing the animal of his inconvenient habit.

It is plain that the punishment of the treadmill can have no effect in the prevention of first offences: for, if it were even publicly exhibited, its mode of operation would not be fully understood or appreciated. If I may confide in physiological reasoning, I should expect that the best means of preventing the first commission of crimes, would be the constant occupation of all ranks of society in the manner most suited to their capacities. As uninteresting labor is the most effectual punishment, interesting labor would form the best preventive of crime.

In devoting a considerable part of this lecture to shew the important illustrations afforded by anatomy and physiology, in many branches of knowledge beside medical science, I have addressed myself principally to those who are not of our profession; but it may not be useless for the anatomical student to be informed that he

is engaged in a pursuit, which is not merely subservient to his own proper business, but is also associated with many of the arts and sciences that receive the attention, and excite the interest, of all well educated persons in society.

Anatomy and physiology are admitted by all persons to be not merely an indispensable accessory, but the very foundation of medical science.

Anatomy may be considered as consisting of three kinds. The first includes the forms and position of parts in relation to each other, and to the external surface; the second is the minute or intimate structure of those parts, by which their offices or functions in the animal economy are determined; the third refers to the changes in structure, form, and position of parts, which arise from disease. These, then, might be distinguished by the names of the Anatomy of *forms*, the Anatomy of *structure*, and the Anatomy of *disease*.

Physiology embraces the history and explanation of all the phenomena of life, which are to be deduced from the anatomical structure of man and all other animals, from experiments on living animals, and from observation on all the natural actions and properties of animated beings.

Pathology is the explanation of the nature of disease, as it may be derived from morbid anatomy, and from observation of symptoms.

These divisions of medical science borrow great light from each other. Anatomy is unprofitable unless it lead to the knowledge of the uses of parts. The most important consequence of physiology is the explanation of disease: and again, the offices of parts can never be fully ascertained, but by observing them in both their natural and diseased condition.

The anatomy of forms is essentially necessary to the performance of almost all surgical operations. Let us suppose a part to be removed, a wounded blood-vessel to be secured, a protruded bowel or dislocated bone to be returned: in each of these cases the surgeon should have the most clear and distinct recollection of the figure of all the parts concerned, and of their relation to the neighbouring parts. Let us take this arm as an example, and suppose that the artery is to be tied, as the only means of saving the limb or the life of the patient: it is manifest that the search for the vessel, encompassed as it is by nerves and veins, is an anatomical dissection performed on the living body.

In treating the diseased state of any organ of the body, it is necessary to understand what is the intimate structure of the part, how it is influenced in its actions, and how it influences other and often remote organs in return.

All diseased actions are carried on in minute structure. It is not the large, but the very

smallest blood-vessels which are engaged in inflammation, in spontaneous hemorrhages, in the growth of tumors, and in all disorders of secretion. [*Preparations of the minute structure of inflammation, of congestion, of tumors, and diseased liver, were shewn to illustrate this observation.*]

It is a law of all animated beings, that disease exists just in proportion to the complexity of structure, and the dependence of functions of different parts of the same body. Indeed this is so likely, that any person might anticipate the statement of the fact. The human being, as possessing the most complicated system of organs, is more than all others afflicted with disease. While, therefore, minute anatomy will teach us the natural structure, and the changes it undergoes in diseases, our acquaintance with the relation and sympathy established amongst the different parts of the body, will explain the causes and the symptoms, and dictate the most rational mode of cure, or of preventing disease.

It is strange that in this enlightened age, when the importance of anatomy is better understood than at any former period, the prejudice against appropriating the dead and decaying body to the only useful and honorable purpose to which it can be applied, should have shewn itself in Scotland and England to a fanatical excess. It is a fact which I know,

that in consequence of the difficulty of dissection, from this ill-judged zeal, young men are now entering the professions of medicine and surgery, without any precise or practical knowledge of the shape and situation of the parts they have to operate on, or of the structure which they have to rectify when diseased. If ever such persons come to operate well, it will be by *learning their anatomy by cutting the living, not the dead ;* and as to their *knowledge of disease*, it must be at best but a *fortunate guess.* I do not know which deserves greater condemnation, the wickedness, or the folly of those who would oppose their own ignorant feelings to the acknowledged interest and good of the whole community, and to the preservation of their own lives, and that of their friends, for whose bodies, when no longer capable of feeling pain, they have so much tenderness and respect. I would not, however, argue this point on the score of necessity, or justify dissection as an unavoidable indignity to the dead; for, in such cases, who would not endeavour to save themselves and their friends from being made the sacrifice? On the contrary, I say, that if dissection were really an injury or an insult to any one living or dead, it ought to be totally prohibited. But, if we reflect coolly for one moment, we must admit, that employing the body in the communication of useful know-

ledge, and preserving its parts with care and respect, for the purpose of transmitting this knowledge to posterity, ought to be more agreeable to every person's feelings, than casting the body into the earth or into the water, broiling it in the fire, exposing it to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey, or depositing it in vaults, to putrefy and moulder away; or even embalming it, which consists in preserving the external form in a frightful and unnatural state, whilst all the internal organs, which are so much more important during life, are thrown out.

It is a remarkable and instructive fact, that each of these modes of disposing of the body, is venerated by some nations, while others would abhor all different modes as being unfeeling and indecent; shewing that there is no common or natural reason on the subject, but that the customs respecting the dead are arbitrary, local, and irrational.

If it were the custom of this country to surrender every dead body to anatomical purposes, people would have a much greater aversion to be buried than they have at present to be dissected. I shall now shew the change which takes place in the grave, and contrast a part which has been buried, with the same part preserved as an anatomical preparation, after seeing which, I have no doubt the later will

appear to you the less disagreeable. In fact the mode of disposing of the body by burial, is the most offensive of all that have been employed.

When the process of dissolution takes place in water, all the parts of the body, except the bones, are converted into a substance called adipocire, similar in appearance and qualities to spermaceti. [*A specimen of which was shewn.*]

When the body is deposited in situations, where the process of putrifaction is prevented by its being hastily and completely dried, the original figure is lost, as the principal bulk and weight of the body depend on the presence of its fluids, but there is nothing offensive in its appearance. Some dry vaults have the effect of thus changing the bodies. The vault of St. Michan's church in this city has this property in a very remarkable degree. [*A finger obtained from St. Michan's vault was here shewn.*]

The Egyptian method of preserving the body is not known with certainty at the present day. I have very little doubt, however, from examining their Mummies, that honey was employed for the purpose: and from some experiments I have made with the pyroligneous acid, I believe that the preserved heads which have been brought into this country from New Zealand have been dried by burning wood. If it were an object to preserve the external appearance of the dead

body, the best means for the purpose are, to divest the skin of its cuticle, and immerse the body for a considerable time in a solution of alum and nitre, or of alum and bay salt, and afterwards wash the surfaces with pyroligneous acid, and place the preparation in a situation to dry; by this process the parts shrink so little, that the likeness of the person is not lost. [*Specimens of this mode of preservation were exhibited.*]

I cannot conclude, without bespeaking your indulgence for having attempted the extensive and difficult subject of the general uses and applications of anatomical science in so imperfect a manner. If, however, you will give the matter full consideration, you will find that it will assume new and stronger lights the more it is examined. You will indeed find, that relations exist between all the branches of human knowledge, proving the magnitude, the simplicity, the diversity, and unity of those laws which govern both sentient beings and natural bodies, and which produce the beauty, the excellence, and the harmony of the universe.

NOTES

OF CONCLUDING LECTURE,

GIVEN ON SATURDAY THE 30TH OF APRIL, 1825.

MANNER IN WHICH THE SCHOOL HAS BEEN CARRIED ON DURING THE PRESENT SESSION.—*Examinations—Library—Regular Demonstrative Course—Ample supply of subjects*—Even *too much superintendance* of the dissecting room—*Surgical operations* repeated—Notwithstanding all this, no interruption or postponement, and the whole, including *diseases of skin*, within the time—If the common accidents and interruptions had occurred, they would have been misrepresented.

NEW HOUSE—Its operation on the School—How far I was instrumental to it, or concerned in the plan—Reasons for the shape, &c. of the rooms.

PROJECTED IMPROVEMENTS.—*Museum—Preparations, Surgical Instruments, and Plates and Drawings exposed.*—This the first instance of a Museum being made instructive to Pupils, except during Lecture—*Subclasses* of Dissectors—*Gymnasium.*

PARTING ADVICE.—*Occupation* during the *Summer—Comparative Anatomy—Physiology—Hospital Practice—Collateral Branches.—What is Medical Knowledge?*—Natural Structure and Function—Diseased Structure and Function—Treatment—mechanic and scientific—All else ornamental.

THE PECULIAR DUTIES AND PROSPECTS OF THE PRACTITIONER—*Honesty—Faithfulness* to secrets—*Humanity—Li-*

berality—*Delicacy* to other professional men, but *not Subserviency*—*Prudence* towards all most essential—*Steadiness* in business.

FAIR MEANS OF ACQUIRING DISTINCTION—*Writing original books*—*Making anatomical preparations*—*Cultivation of other scientific men.*

UNWORTHY MEANS OF ACQUIRING PRACTICE—*General mystery*—*Leaguing* with other medical men—*Hanging* to some great man—*Abetting* some political party or violent sect—*Marrying* for money—*Employing relatives, nurses,* or other old women to puff—These means are concealed *quackery*—unnecessary—may be unsuccessful—never lead to eminence—attended with self-reproach—The happiest man, in good or bad fortune, is he who has kept himself "*unspotted from the world.*"

THE END.

00029347

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 21 October, 2015